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Aaron at the Head of the Men, and his Sister *Miriam*, with a Timbrel in her Hand, at the Head of the Women, they sung and play'd *alternately*, and, in the Height of their Joy, intermixed *Dances*.

BUT, notwithstanding all these thankful Acknowledgments of God's Goodness, scarce had the *Israelites* travell'd three Days from the *Red-Sea* into the Wilderness of *Sbur*, before their excessive Thirst, and Want of Water, put them out of all Patience: And when, in a short Time, they met with *some* (at a Place, which is call'd *Marah*) it prov'd so * bitter, that they cou'd not drink it: This Disappointment inflam'd their Thirst, and exasperated their Murmurings against *Moses*, 'till, by the divine Direction, he made use of the Wood of a certain Tree, which, as soon as it was thrown into the Water, chang'd its offensive Quality, and made it sweet.

The Water at
Marah made
sweet for
them.

And Manna
given them
from Heaven.

FROM *Marah* they went, and encamp'd at † *Elim*, where there were twelve Wells of Water, and a good Quantity of *Palm*,

or *Date-Trees*, and here they continu'd for some Time. From hence they remov'd towards the Wilderness of *Sin*; but before they enter'd it, the suppos'd Scarceness of Provisions made them begin to distrust God, and to repent, from their very Hearts, that they had suffer'd themselves to be decoy'd from the Plenty, they enjoy'd in the Land of *Egypt*, into a barren, wild *Waste*, where they cou'd have no other Prospect, but to die with Hunger: And therefore, to convince these murmuring People of his Almighty Power and Providence, God was pleas'd to inform them, that he wou'd take Care to supply them with Food from Heaven, which accordingly came to pass. For, that very Evening, he caus'd † *Quails* to fall among them in such great Quantities, as quite cover'd their Camp; and, on the next Morning, as soon as the Dew was gone, there lay, upon the Ground, a little white round Thing, much in the Shape of a *Coriander-Seed*, which when the People saw

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* The Word *Marah*, in the *Hebrew* Language, signifies *Bitterness*; and it was from the Taste of the Waters, that the Place receiv'd its Name. That there are several Fountains of bitter Water not far from the *Red Sea*, at some small Distance from the City *Arfinoë*, is attested by *Strabo*, *Diodorus*, and most modern Travellers, but then the Question is, whether it was by the miraculous Power of God, or by the natural Virtue of the Wood, to which *Moses* was directed, that these bitter Waters were at this Time made *sweet*? The Author of that excellent Book, call'd *Ecclesiasticus*, seems to be of the latter Opinion: For, having treated of the Honour and Esteem due to a *Physician*, he adds, *the Lord has created Medicines out of the Earth, and he, that is wise, will not abhor them. Was not the Water made sweet with Wood, that the Virtue thereof might be known?* Ecclef. xxxviii. 5. But, notwithstanding the Authority of this Writer, we have Reason to think, that there was no Tree in these Parts of this Virtue, because had its Virtue once been known, there is no Question to be made, but that others, as well as *Moses*, wou'd have made Use of it to the same Purpose; but that the Writers, who make mention of these bitter Waters, wou'd have told us at the same Time, of a Tree, or Trees, growing hard by, which had a *Medicinal* Quality to correct the Taste of them; but since we meet with nothing of this Kind, we may reasonably suppose, that the Author of *Ecclesiasticus* (a Book of modern Composition in Comparison of *Moses's* Writings) speculating in the Chapter upon the Medicines, which God had provided for Man's Use, offer'd this Hint purely from his own Fancy, and without any Authority for it, and consequently we may conclude, that the Correction of the Quality of this Water is to be ascrib'd, not so much to the Virtue of the Wood, as to the Power of God, who us'd it, rather as a Sign to the *Israelites*, than as an Instrument to himself in doing it. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and *Pool's* Annotations, and *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. III. lib. 10.

† In remarking the several Stations of the *Israelites*, from the *Red-Sea*, until they came to the Mount *Sinai*, we must observe, that *Moses* does not set down every Place, where they encamp'd (as he does in *Numbers*, Chap. xxxiii.) but only those, where some remarkable Thing was done; that *Elim*, where they were now encamp'd, was esteem'd a pleasant and fruitful Place, at least in Comparison of the Desert and barren Parts about it; and that the *Desert of Sin*, which was their eighth Station, and *Rephidim* their Tenth, lay at equal Distances, in their Way to the holy Mountain. *Well's* Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. II.

† The Word, which we render *Quail*, according to the Confession of the *Jews* themselves, is of uncertain Signification, and may denote a *Locust*, as well as a *Quail*: But what shou'd rather incline us to the latter Acceptation, is that Passage of the *Psalmist*, (lxxviii. 27.) where he tells us, that *God rained Flesh upon them, as thick as Dust, and feathered Fowls, like as the Sand of the Sea*; which cannot, with any tolerable Propriety, be apply'd to *Insects*. But here we must remember, that this was done in the Middle of *April*, when these Birds are known to fly out of *Egypt* cross the *Red-Sea* in vast Quantities; so that the Sum of this Miracle will consist, not so much in the prodigious Number of them, that fell in the *Israelites* Camp, as in God's directing them thither, and in that very Evening too, according to his Promise, and his Servant *Moses's* Prediction. *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7.

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saw, they were struck with Admiration, and said one to another, † *what is this?* And from thence they gave it the Name of *Manna*.

God's Directions concerning it.

THIS was the Bread, which the *Israelites* were to eat for the Space of forty Years, and therefore God was pleas'd to give these special Directions concerning it. — That it was to be gather'd by Measure, an *Homer* for every Head, according to the Number of each Family; but this Direction some Persons flighting, and gathering above the Proportion that was allow'd them, found their Quantity miraculously lessen'd, while the more moderate had theirs increas'd: That it was to be gather'd fresh every Morning, and all, that was gather'd, consum'd that same Day; which Precept some Persons likewise neglecting, and keeping a Part of it until the next Morning, found that it was putrify'd and stunk: That, on the *seventh* Day, (which was the † *Sabbath*) there was none to be found; and therefore, on the *sixth*, they

were to gather a *double* Portion, which being laid up, according to God's Direction, against the ensuing Day, was never once known to corrupt: And that, to perpetuate the Memory of this † miraculous Bread, wherewith God had fed their Forefathers in the Wilderness so long, an *Homer* of it shou'd be put up in a Pot, and reposit in the *Ark of the Covenant* within the *Sanctuary*.

From Exod. xiii. to Chap. xxxiv. 24.

FROM the Defart of *Sin* the *Israelites* had not advanc'd many Days Journey towards *Horeb*, 'till, coming to *Rephidim*, and finding no Water there, they fell into their old Way of distrusting God's Providence, and murmuring against *Moses*; but on this Occasion, they seem'd to be more mutinous and desperate than ever. It was in vain for *Moses* to endeavour to persuade them to be patient a little, and wait God's Leisure. His Words did but inflame, and carry them to such an Height of Rage, that they even threaten'd to stone him; so that he was forc'd to have Recourse to God, who

They murmur again for Want of Water, and are miraculously supply'd.

† Our Translation, and some others, make *Moses* fall into a plain Contradiction, in relating this Story of the *Manna*, which they render thus; *And when the Children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, it is Manna, for they know not what it was*, Exod. xvi. 15. whereas the *Septuagint*, and several Authors, both antient and modern, have translated the Text according to the Original, *The Israelites seeing this, said one to another, what is this? For they knew not what it was*: For we must observe, that the Word, by which they ask'd (*what is this?*) was, in their Language, *Man*, which signifies likewise *Meat ready prepared*; and therefore it was always afterwards call'd *Man*, or *Manna*. Various are the Conceits, which the *Jewish* Writers have entertain'd concerning the Taste of this *Manna*, and some of them not unlikely have been borrow'd from the Author of the Book of *Wisdom*, where he tells us of *Manna*, that it was able to content every Man's Delight, agreeing to every Taste, and attemping itself to every Man's Liking, *Wisd.* xvi. 20, 21. Whereupon some have affirm'd, that it had the Taste of any Sort of Fish or Fowl, according to the Wish of him that eat it, but these are idle Fancies; what we know of Certainty is this, — That, here in *Exodus*, *Moses* tells us, that its Taste was like *Wafers made with Honey*, and in *Numbers*, he says, that the Cakes made of it had the Taste of *fresh Oil*, Chap. xi. 8. so that we may conjecture, that it had a Sweetness, when gather'd, which evaporated in the grinding, and baking. It tasted like *Honey*, when taken off the Ground, but the Cakes made of it were as Cakes of Bread kneaded with Oil. Essay for a new Translation, and *Shuckford's* Connect. Vol. III. l. 10.

† This seems to be the first Time, that the Rest on the *seventh* Day was solemnly appointed. God indeed, from the very first, intended to preserve the Memory of the Creation in six Days, by appointing the *seventh* Day to be kept holy; but when, before the Flood, Men grew so wicked, as to neglect the Thoughts of God, they very little regarded the Distinction between this Day and others; and, after the Flood, the Dispersion of Mankind very much blotted it out of their Minds, as it did many other good Things. In the Family of *Abraham*, we may presume, the Remembrance of it was preserv'd, though not with such a strict Abstinence from all Labour, as was afterwards injoin'd; and therefore we read nothing of their resting from their Travel upon that Day, before their coming out of *Egypt*. The Truth is, they were kept under such severe Servitude, and Day and Night to press'd by their Taskmasters to hard Labour without Intermission, that all Observation of the *Sabbath* was, very likely, laid aside; but when God brought them out of Slavery, he renew'd his Commandment for it, with this Addition (in Memory of the *Egyptian* Bondage) that they shou'd rest from all Manner of Labour upon that Day. *Patrick's* Commentary.

† Whether this *Manna* had those extraordinary Qualities in it or no, which some imagine, it must be allow'd to be truly *miraculous* upon the following Accounts: 1. That it fell but six Days in the Week. 2. That it fell in such a prodigious Quantity, as sustain'd almost three Millions of Souls. 3. That there fell a double Quantity every *Friday*, to serve them for the next Day, which was their *Sabbath*. 4. That what was gather'd on the first five Days stunk, and bred Worms, if kept above one Day, but that which was gather'd on *Friday*, kept sweet for two Days. And lastly, That it continu'd falling while the *Israelites* abode in the Wilderness, but ceas'd as soon as they came out of it, and had got Corn to eat in the Land of *Canaan*. *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7.

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who was soon pleas'd to dissipate his Fears by promising to signalize that Place by a miraculous Supply of Water, as he had lately done another by a miraculous Supply of Food. Taking therefore the Elders of the People (who might bear Testimony to the Fact) along with him, *Moses*, as he was commanded by God, went to a certain Rock on the Side of Mount *Horeb*, (which was distinguish'd from all the rest by the divine Appearance resting upon it) and no sooner had he smitten it with his Rod, but Water in Abundance gush'd out at several Places, and, joining in one common Stream, † ran down to the Camp at *Rephidim*. This Station however, because it was so infamous for the Mutiny of the People, and their Distrust of God, *Moses* (as a Caution and Remembrance to them for the future) thought proper to have call'd *Massah*, and *Meribah*; which signify *Temptation* and *Contention*.

They defeat the
Amalekites.

WHILE the *Israelites* continu'd at *Rephidim*, they were alarm'd by the Approach of an Army of *Amalekites*, who were just upon their Heels, and ready to fall upon them. Hereupon *Moses* order'd *Joshua*, a valiant young Man who was always about him, to draw out a Party of the choicest Men in the Camp, against next Morning, and to give the *Amalekites*

Battle. When the next Morning came, *Moses*, attended by *Aaron* and *Hur*, went to the Top of an *Eminence*, from whence they might have a View of the Field of Battle; and, as the two Armies were engag'd, so it was, that while *Moses* held up his Hands to God in Prayer, and in one of them his wonder-working Rod, the *Israelites* prevail'd; but when, through Weariness, his Hands began to drop, the *Amalekites* had the better; which *Aaron* and *Hur* perceiving, set him down upon a Stone, and supported his Hands on each Side, until the going down of the Sun, in which Time the *Amalekites* were quite routed, and put to the Sword.

THIS good Success, in their first martial Enterprize, gave the *Israelites* great Encouragement; and the Action indeed was so very remarkable, that, to transmit it to Posterity, *Moses* was order'd to record it in a Book, for *Joshua's* future Instructions, and to offer a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving: Whereupon he rais'd, upon the Spot, an Altar, which he call'd *Jehovah Nissi*, the Lord is my Banner, as never doubting, but that God, who had commanded him to denounce † incessant War against the *Amalekites*, wou'd not fail to crown it with Success.

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† It was this same Water which serv'd the *Israelites*, not only in this Encampment of *Rephidim*, and in that of Mount *Sinai*, but in their other Encampments likewise, perhaps as far as *Cadish-Barnea*. For the *Jews* have a Tradition, that, as these Waters were granted for the Sake of the Merits of *Miriam*, *Moses's* Sister; so they happen'd to fail, as soon as she dy'd; and hence it is, that, at the Encampment of *Cadish-Barnea*, which was soon after the Death of *Miriam*, we find the People falling into Murmurings again for Want of Water. *St Paul*, speaking of this miraculous Rock, which he makes the Type of *Jesus Christ*, tells us, that it follow'd them, 1 Cor. x. 4. And from hence some have inferr'd, either that the Streams, which gush'd out of the Rock, form'd themselves into a Kind of River, which follow'd them through all their Encampments, or that they carry'd the Rock itself in a Cart, like a great Tun always full, and always open to those that had an Inclination to drink. But these are idle Fictions, drawn from Words, that are not to be understood in a literal Sense; what we may learn of Certainty from modern Travellers is, ——— That, at the Foot of the Mount *Horeb*, there is still to be seen a Brook of Water, but as for the Rock itself, which is a vast large Stone standing separate by itself, there is no Water, that now runs from it, though there are, at present, to be seen twelve Holes, or Mouths, as it were, from whence the Water did flow heretofore. *Calmet's* Dictionary, under the Word *Rephidim*, and *Morizan's* Voyages, l. i. c. 1.

† The *Amalekites* were a People descended from *Amalek*, the Son of *Eliphaz*, the Son of *Ejau*, by a Concubine; Gen. xxxvi. 12. And the Ground of their Enmity against the *Israelites* is generally suppos'd to have been an innate Hatred, from the Remembrance of *Jacob's* depriving their Progenitor both of his Birth-right and Blessing. Their falling upon them however, and that without any Provocation, when they saw them reduc'd to so low a Condition by the Fatigue of their March, and the excessive Drought, they labour'd under, was an inhuman Action, and justly deserv'd the Defeat, which *Joshua* gave them: But then the Reason, why God thought fit to denounce a perpetual War against them, is to be resolv'd into this, ——— That, knowing the *Israelites* were pre-ordain'd by God to be put in Possession of the Land of *Canaan*, they came against them with an armed Force, in Hopes of frustrating the Designs of Providence concerning them. And this is the Reason, which *Moses* himself assigns for this Declaration of War;

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Jethro visits
Moses, and
advises him to
appoint De-
puties under
him.

THE Defeat of the *Amalekites* open'd a Way for the *Israelites* to Mount *Sinai*, where God at first appear'd to *Moses* in the *Burning-Bush*, and not far from the Place, where his Father-in-law *Jethro* dwelt; † who, having heard what mighty Things God had done for him, and the People he conducted, took his Daughter *Zipporah*, *Moses's* Wife, and the two Sons *Gershom*, and *Eliezar*, which he had by her, and brought them with him to the *Israelitish* Camp: Where, after mutual Salutations and Embraces, *Moses* entertain'd him with a particular Account of every Thing, that had befallen him, during his Absence; and, in Return, *Jethro*, who was a devout Man, offer'd up solemn Praises to God, and join'd with *Moses*, and the rest of the *Elders of Israel*, in Sacrifices, and such holy Rejoicings, as were thought proper upon this Occasion.

WHILE *Jethro* stay'd in the Camp, he

cou'd not but perceive the great Weight of Business, in hearing Complaints, and determining Differences among so numerous a People, which *Moses* must necessarily labour under; and therefore he gave him Advice, to substitute under him a certain Number of Officers, Men of Parts, and Men of Courage, such as *fear'd God*, and *hated Covetousness*, to be Rulers, some over *Thousands*, some over *Hundreds*, some over *Fifties*, and some over *Tens*, with proper Authority, for them to hear, and determine † all such Matters, as they were able, but where Causes were too difficult for their Decision, these to refer to him; which, in the Event, *as he told him*, wou'd prove a great Ease and Advantage both to himself, and the People: And this Advice of his as soon as he saw put in Execution, *Jethro* took leave of his *Son-in-Law*, and return'd into his own Country.

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War; because his, (i. e. *Amalek's*) Hand is against the Throne of God, (i. e. against God himself) therefore the Lord will wage War against him from one Generation to another, Exod. xvii. 16. The Injury done the *Israelites* was not so much, as the Affront offer'd to the divine Majesty, and therefore God threatens utterly to extirpate the Designers of it. Universal History, l. 2. c. 7. and *Patrick's* Commentary.

† When it was, that *Jethro* came from *Midian* to visit his Son-in-law *Moses*, whether immediately after the Fight with the *Amalekites*, as it is here set down, or some Time after, when the *Israelites* were better settled, is a Matter much controverted amongst Interpreters. The *Jews* are generally agreed, and to them do some other great Names (as well as the learned *Usher* and *Selden*) assent, that this Visit happen'd after the Promulgation of the Law, in the first Year of their coming from *Egypt*, and in the Month *Tisri* (say the *Jews*) above three Months after God gave *Moses* the second Tables; though others will have it to have been in the second Year. It seems reasonable to think however, that *Jethro* wou'd take the first Opportunity to visit *Moses*, and to bring him and so near Relations together, when once he had heard the News of their Departure from *Egypt*, and passing the *Red-Sea*; which he (as a Borderer upon the Wilderness) cou'd not long be a Stranger to. It is to be observ'd farther, that, had the Law been given before *Jethro's* Arrival in the *Israelitish* Camp, *Moses* cou'd hardly have escap'd saying something of the most remarkable Passage of all others, God's glorious Appearance upon Mount *Sinai*, and the *Decalogue*, which he pronounc'd from thence: Whereas, all that he relates at this Meeting, is, what God had done to *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*; in what Manner he had deliver'd his People; and what Travail had come upon them by the Way, which comprehend their Passage of the *Red-Sea*, their Want of Water and Bread, their Engagement with the *Amalekites*, and, in short, whatever we read in the foregoing Chapters. But of the most momentous Thing of all, we find him making no mention, nor *Jethro*, in the Congratulations which he gives him, taking any Manner of Notice; which we can hardly suppose wou'd, on either Side, have been omitted, had they been prior to this Interview; nor can we conceive, for which Reason *Moses* shou'd place the Account of this Interview in immediate Succession, had it not follow'd the Fight with the *Amalekites*. *Patrick's* Commentary.

† The Words of the Text are, *Every great Matter they shall bring to thee, but every small Matter they shall judge*, Exod. xviii. 22. And from hence some have imagin'd, that there were several Sorts of Causes, that might not, at first, be brought before inferior Courts, and these they make to be four. 1. All sacred Matters, or Things relating to God and Religion. 2. All Matters of Equity, where the Rigour of the Law was to be mitigated. 3. All capital Cases: And lastly, all such Cases, as the Rulers of *Thousands* referr'd to *Moses*. What the other Rulers referr'd to him was indeed properly under his Cognizance, because it suppos'd an Incapacity in them, either for the Want of some Law, or a Non-agreement among themselves, to determine it; but, where nothing of this happen'd, they had a full Power to judge finally. Neither was it the People (when a Cause was thought intricate) that were to bring it primarily before *Moses*, but, when any such Difficulty arose, as they were not able to surmount, the Judges (as *Moses* himself directs them, Deut. i. 17.) were the Persons, that were to order the Appeal to him. *Bring it to me*, says he, *and I will hear it*; which shews, that the Cause had been before the Bar of inferior Courts before, only they were not skilful enough to determine it. So that the Words in the Text do not intimate, that there were some Causes, which the other Judges might not try, if they were able; but only, where the Causes were hard, and they incompetent to decide them, these they were to refer to *Moses*. *Patrick's* Commentary.

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IT was three Months after their Departure out of *Egypt*, when the *Israelites* came, and encamp'd in the Wilderness of *Sinai*, before the Mount of God: And, they had not been long there; before God call'd *Moses* to come up to him on the Mount, and there charg'd him to remind the *Israelites* of the many Wonders he had wrought in their Favour; and that, (notwithstanding their frequent Murmurings, and Distrust of his Providence,) if, for the future, they wou'd become obedient to his Laws, he wou'd still look upon them as his peculiar People, a favourite Nation, and a *Royal Priesthood*,

God pronounces
the Ten Com-
mandments
from Mount
Sinai.

UPON his Descent from the Mount, *Moses* made a Report to the *Elders*, and they to the People, of the gracious Message, which God had sent them; which as soon as the People heard, they promis'd, in Return, all possible Obedience to the divine Commands. With this Answer of the People's *Moses* ascended the Mountain again, and receiv'd a Command from God, that all the People shou'd purify themselves, and be in Readiness against the *third Day*;

for that, within three Days, || he wou'd come down upon the Mountain, and make a Covenant with them. In the mean Time he gave him strict Charge to set Boundaries about the Foot of the Mountain, which none might adventure to pass; under the severest Penalties: And when he had thus done, and the People had prepar'd themselves, according to the divine Injunction, on the third Day, they saw, early in the Morning, the Mountain surrounded with a thick Cloud, out of which proceeded such terrible Thunder and Lightnings, as fill'd them with Horror and Amazement.

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THE Signal, for the People to approach the Mountain, was upon the first Sounding of the Trumpet; and therefore, as soon as it began, *Moses* brought them out of the Camp, as near to the Mountain, as the Barrier wou'd permit, and there they observ'd the whole Top of *Sinai* cover'd with Fire and Smoak; while the Foundations of it seem'd to tremble and shake under them. * In the Midst of this dreadful Scene, the Trumpet was heard

to

|| It must be observ'd here, as also in other Places of the like Nature, that the Scripture, suiting itself to Man's common Way of Speaking and Thinking, assigns such Things to God, as are only proper to the *Effects*. Thus it is said, that God *descended on the Mountain*, because he made his Presence more visible there by sensible and surprising Effects: And whereas it is said by the *Protomartyr*, St *Stephen*, (Acts vii. 53.) that the Jews received the Law by the Disposition of Angels, and by St *Paul* to the *Galatians*, iii. 19. that the Law was ordained by Angels in the Hand of a Mediator, there is in these, and the like Passages, no Contradiction between the *New* and *Old Testament*, which assigns all this Dispensation to God himself. For, though it was God, who descended (in the Sense we have explain'd it) upon the Mount, yet the Angels, these Courtiers of Heaven, attended him, and made up his Train; and though he himself pronounc'd the Law, yet the Thunder, and Lightnings, and Noise resembling the Sounding of a Trumpet, which were preparatory to such Pronunciation, may not improperly be ascrib'd to the Ministry of Angels. The Intent, however, of these Passages in the *New Testament* is only to oppose the Gospel to the Law in this Respect, viz. that, when God gave the Law, he was surrounded with an awful Host of Angels, but when our Lord deliver'd the Gospel, he was cloath'd in our Flesh, and adapted himself to our Weakness. *Howell's History of the Bible*, and *Millar's Church History*.

* Of all the Descriptions, that I ever read, there is no one seems to me so awful and tremendous, as this Descent of God upon Mount *Horeb*, and the amazing *Phænomena*, that attended it. The Pomp pretended to by *Pagan* Deities, even when set off with the Grandeur of Poetry, and the Magic of Numbers, is uncouth, ridiculous, and profane. The Procession of *Bacchus*, as it is describ'd by *Ovid*, (Lib. iii.) is neither more nor less, than a downright drunken Riot, or the brutal Pastime of a disorderly Country-Wake. The boisterous Expedition of *Neptune*, even as it is painted by the great Master, *Homer*, (Iliad. xiii.) seems to represent nothing more august, than the Roaring of *London-Bridge*, or a Rabble of Sea-Monsters frisking in a Storm: Nay, that very famous Speech of *Jupiter*, (Iliad. xviii.) where he maintains his Supereminence, by shaking Olympus with his Imperial Nod, and menacing his refractory Offspring, in Case they shou'd rebel, tho' it certainly be embellish'd with the utmost Force of Words, and Stretch of Art, is, at the best, but a lame and imperfect Copy, in the main Strokes of it, from the native Majesty of this unlabour'd Prose, in the sixth Chapter of *Exodus*. It must be own'd however, that our *English* Poet *Milton* has, in several Places, describ'd the usual Display of the Divine Majesty in a very magnificent Manner.

Clouds began
To darken all the Hill, and Smoak to rowl
In dusky Wreaths, reluctant Flames, the Sight
Of Wrath awak'd: Nor with less Dread the Loud

Ethereal

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to sound louder and louder, Claps of Thunder, and Flashes of Fire were more and more ingeminated; 'till, all on a sudden, every Thing was hush and silent, and then God was heard, from the Midst of the Fire and Smoak, (which still continu'd) to pronounce the Law of the *Decalogue*, or * Ten Commandments, which is indeed a compleat *System* of the *moral* Part of the *Jewish* Institutes, and in few, but significant Words, comprehends their Duty to God, to their Neighbour, and to Themselves.

IN the mean Time the People, astonish'd at what they saw and heard, remov'd farther off, and, as soon as the divine Voice had ceas'd speaking, came to *Moses*, and, in the Height of their Fear and Surprise, besought of him, that, for the future, he wou'd speak to them in God's Stead, and whatever he enjoin'd them they wou'd obey, because they were conscious, that were they to hear his dreadful Voice again, they shou'd certainly die with Horror and Astonishment. This Motion, as it bespoke their Reverence and Respect, was not displeasing to *Moses*; and therefore he assur'd them, that all this wonderful Scene was not exhibited to them with a Design to create in them any *slavish* Fear, but a *filial* Confidence, and Submission to such Laws, as the divine Wisdom shou'd hereafter think fit to enjoin them: And, with these Words, he went up to

the Mount again, where, (in Addition to the *Decalogue*) he receiv'd from God several other Laws, both *ceremonial* and *political*, which seem to have been calculated with a wise Design to preserve the People in their Obedience to God, to prevent their Intermixture with other Nations, and to advance the Welfare of their *Commonwealth*, by securing to all the *Members* of it a quiet Enjoyment of their *Lives* and *Properties*.

WITH this Body of Laws, which were all that God, for the present, thought fit to enjoin, *Moses* returning from the Mount, erected an Altar to God, and offer'd Burnt-Sacrifices and Peace-Offerings upon it; and, having caus'd the Contents of this new Covenant to be read to all the People, and exacted a solemn Promise from them, that they wou'd keep it faithfully, he confirm'd this Covenant, by sprinkling the Altar, the Book, and the People with the Blood of the *Victims*, which were slain upon this Occasion; and then order'd twelve *Pillars* to be rais'd, according to the Number of the twelve Tribes, as a standing Monument of this Alliance between God and them.

As soon as *Moses* had made an End of this Ceremony, he took *Nadab*, *Abihu*, and seventy of the Elders of *Israel* some Part of the Way towards the Mountain, where, (without incurring any Hurt) they were vouchsaf'd a Prospect of the divine Presence,

From Exod. xiii. to Chap. xxxiv. 24.

Gives the Israelites other Precepts, and makes a Covenant with them.

Ethereal Trumpet from on high 'gan blow,
At which Command, the Powers Militant,
That stood for Heaven, in mighty *Quadrate* join'd
Of Union irresistible, mov'd on
In Silence their bright Legions, to the Sound
Of instrumental Harmony. ———

Again, He on his impious Foes right onward drove,
Gloomy as Night: Under his burning Wheels
The stedfast *Empyrean* shook throughout,
All but the Throne of God. ———

And again, He ended, and the Sun gave Signal high
To the bright Minister, that watch'd: He blew
His Trumpet, heard on *Oreb*, since perhaps
When God descended, and perhaps once more
To sound the general Doom. ———

Paradise Lost, lib. vi. and xi.

* These Ten Commandments, as contain'd in the xxth Chapter of *Exodus*, are so very well known, that there is no Occasion here for the Repetition of them: And in what Manner they are to be dispos'd of in the two *Tables*; whether *four* are to be plac'd in the *first*, and *six* in the *second* Table (which is the common Distribution) or an *equal* Number is to be appropriated to each Table (as *Philo*, and his Followers among the *Jewish Rabbins* contend) is not a Question of Moment enough to be discuss'd in this Place.

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Presence, and where, having committed the Care of the People to them, he took *Joshua* along with him, and went up higher to the Top of the Mount, where he continu'd for the Space of forty Days.

Moses receives
Instructions
concerning the
Tabernacle,
&c.

HERE it was that God, calling him nearer to himself, and into the Cloud, where he then resided, instructed him in what Manner the Tent, or *Tabernacle*, wherein he intended to be worshipp'd, was to be made. He describ'd to him the Form of the *Sanctuary*, the Table for the *Shew-bread*, the Altar of *Frankincense*, the Altar for *Burnt-Offerings*, the Court of the *Tabernacle*, the Basin to wash in, the Ark, the Candlestick, and all the other sacred Utenfils. He gave him the Form of the sacerdotal Vestments, and taught him how the Priests were to be consecrated; what Part of the Oblation they were to take, and in what Manner the perpetual Sacrifice was to be offer'd. He nam'd the two chief Men, *Bezaleel*, of the Tribe of *Judah*, and *Aholiab*, of the Tribe of *Dan*, who were to be the

Builders of the *Tabernacle*; and, having recommended a strict Observation of the *Sabbath*, he gave him the two || Tables of Stone, wherein, with his own Hand, at least by his own Direction, were written the Ten great Commandments, which were the Sum and Substance of the *moral Law*.

From Exod. xiii. to Chap. xxxiv. 24.

WHILE *Moses* was conversing with God on the Mount, and *Joshua* waiting for his Return, the People in the Camp, who, by Reason of his long Absence, began now to give him over for lost, assembled themselves in a riotous Manner about *Aaron's* Tent, and demanded of him to make them some Gods to go before them. The Demand was astonishing, and such was his Weakness, and Want of Courage, that, instead of expostulating the Matter with them, he tamely submitted to their Request; nay, he contributed not a little to their *Idolatry*, by ordering them to bring him a sufficient Quantity of their golden Ornaments, which, when he receiv'd from them, ‡ he tied in a Bag, and thereof made

The People in the mean Time make them a Golden Calf.

|| Who was the first Inventor of Letters, and what Nation had the Invention soonest amongst them, is variously disputed by the Learned. The Invention seems to be a little too exquisite, to have proceeded from Man; and therefore we have, not without Reason, (page 206.) deriv'd its Original from God himself, who might teach it *Adam*, and *Adam* his Posterity. As to particular Nations however, some say that the *Phœnicians*, others the *Ethiopians*, and others again that the *Assyrians* had the first Invention of them; but, upon better Grounds, it is thought by *Eusebius*, (in his *Prepar. Evang.* l. 18.) that *Moses* first taught the Use of Letters to the *Jews*, and that the *Phœnicians* learnt them from them, and the *Grecians* from the *Phœnicians*. The Matter, whereon Men wrote, in ruder Times, was different; some, on the Rinds of Trees, others on Tiles, and others on Tables, which last was chiefly in Use among the *Jews*; and probably from this Example given them by God. The Instrument, wherewith they wrote, was not a Pen, but a Kind of *Engraver*, made of Iron or Steel, call'd a *Stylus*, which was sharp at one End, for the more convenient indenting, or carving the Character, and broad at the other, for the Purpose of scraping it out. To perpetuate the Memory of any Thing, the Custom of Writing on Stone or Brick was certainly very antient, and (as *Josephus*, in the Case of *Seth's* Pillars, tells us, *Antiq.* l. 11.) elder than the Time of the Flood. The Words of the *Decalogue*, spoken by God himself, were such, as deserv'd to be had in everlasting Remembrance; and therefore God was willing to have them engrav'd upon durable Matter; but then the Question is, Whether it was God himself, with his own Finger, as we say, or some other Person, from God's Mouth, who wrote them. In *Exodus* xxxiv. 27, 28. we are told, that the Lord said unto *Moses*, write thou these Words; for, after the Tenour of these Words, have I made a Covenant with thee, and with *Israel*; and that, accordingly, he wrote upon the Tables the Words of the Covenant, even the Ten Commandments. Now since it is a common Form of Speech, that what a Superior commands to be done, that he does himself; the Meaning can be no more, than that the Words of the *Decalogue* were written by the Hand of *Moses*, but by the Direction and Dictation of God. *Howell's*, and the Universal History.

‡ The Words in the Text are these ——— All the People brake off the golden Ear-rings, which were in their Ears, and brought them unto *Aaron*, and he received them at their Hands, and fashioned it with a Graving Tool, after he had made it into a molten Calf, *Exod.* xxxii. 3, 4. But here seems to be a great Mistake in most Versions, as well as our own, and what but few Criticks and Expositors have yet espied. For it may very well be ask'd, who taught *Aaron* to engrave, or how cou'd this *Idol* be engraven so soon, since it is said, that *Aaron* presented it to the People on the Morrow? If the Custom of engraving molten Work was then known, how comes it, that we hear nothing of it even in *Solomon's* Time, since it may be presum'd, that the Furniture of *Solomon's* Temple was wrought with much more Art, than the Figure of *Aaron's* Calf? The whole Foundation of this Mistake seems to lie in the Ambiguity of the Hebrew Word *Tfour*, which sometimes signifies to fashion, and sometimes to bind or tie, and of the Word *Chereth*, which signifies a Graving-tool, and sometimes a Sack, or Bag, 2 Kings v. 23. And therefore the Nature and Circumstances

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made them a molten Calf. Nor was this all, for seeing them so highly delighted with their new-made God, he set it upon a Pedestal, in full Sight of the Camp, built an Altar before it, and appointed the next Day for a solemn Festival, which was begun with offering of Sacrifices to it, and concluded with Feasting, and Dancing, and all † Kinds of noisy Mirth.

God's Indig-
nation here-
upon.

GOD, in the mean Time, who knew what had pass'd in the Camp, acquainted his Servant Moses, that the People, whom he had brought out of Egypt, had so soon forgot their Promises and Engagements, that, at that very Time, they had made them a molten Image, and were worshipping a Golden Calf; a Defection so provoking, that he threaten'd to extirpate the whole Nation of them, but, at the same Time, promis'd to make him the Father and Founder of a Nation, as numerous, and more powerful than these ungrateful Rebels were. But so far was Moses from seeking his own Interest in their Destruction, that he threw himself at the Feet of the Lord, and interceded for their Pardon with so much Importunity, that, having obtain'd a kind of Promise of it, he took

the Tables, and his Servant Joshua with him, and so hasten'd down from the Mount. From Exod. xlii. to Chap. xxxiv. 24.

As soon as they were come to the Bottom, Joshua hearing the Noise, which the People were making, express'd his Apprehensions, that possibly there might be some Alarm, or Engagement in the Camp; but Moses, who knew what had happen'd, told him, that the Noise seem'd to be an Indication of Joy, rather than of War; and, as they drew near, and saw the Golden Calf, and the People singing and dancing about it, Moses, for Indignation, throwing down the Tables he had in his Hands, brake them in Pieces; and then, taking the Idol-Calf, he put it in the Fire, and melted it, and so † reducing it to Powder, and mixing the Powder in Water, (to make them more sensible of their Folly in worshipping That for a God, which was to pass through their Bodies) he made them drink it up.

Moses's just
Concern, and
Revenge upon
the Ring-
leaders.

AFTER this, Aaron was call'd to give an Account, how he came to indulge the People in this idolatrous Humour; but all the Excuse, that he cou'd make, turn'd upon their tumultuous, and his timorous Temper,

stances of the Thing here spoken of might have directed the Translators to think of putting the great Quantity of Ear-rings, which were brought to Aaron, into a Bag; which wou'd have prevented the Incongruity, that the Geneva Version has incurr'd, of engraving the Calf, before it was melted; for so it runs, *he fashioned the Ear-rings with a Graving-tool, and made a molten Calf of them.* Essay for a new Translation.

† The Words in the Text are, (Exod. xxxii. 6.) *the People sat down to eat, and to drink, and rose up to play;* and from hence some have suppos'd their Sense to be, that, after the Israelites had eaten of the Sacrifices offer'd to this new Idol, and drank very plentifully, they committed Fornication, after the Manner of Heathen Worshipers, and, as in After-Ages, they were induc'd to do in the Case of Baal-peor, Numb. xxv. 1, 2. It cannot be deny'd indeed, but that those sacrificial Feasts, among the Heathens, were usually attended with Drunkenness and Lasciviousness, which generally go together; and that the Word, which we render *play*, is the same which Potiphar's Wife makes use of, when she tells her Husband, that his Hebrew Slave came in to mock her, i. e. to violate her Chastity; but since there is no Intimation of this in the Story, but only of their singing and dancing, it is hardly presumable, that they cou'd become so very profligate, the very first Day of their setting up Idol-Worship. Much more reasonable is it therefore to suppose, that all this Merriment of theirs was in Imitation of the Egyptians, who, when they had found out their God Apis, (whereof this Golden Calf was design'd for an Emblem) were us'd to bring him, in solemn Pomp, to Memphis, the Royal City, with Children going before in Procession, and all the Company singing a Song of a Praise to the Deity. Patrick's Commentary.

† This Action of Moses, in melting, grinding, and pounding this golden Idol, in order to make the People drink it, is by some thought contrary to our present Philosophy, and the Account, which Alchymists give us of the Nature of Gold. Nothing is more commonly receiv'd, than the Notion, that Gold cannot be destroy'd; and yet the Royal Academy at Paris have a Burning-Glass, that will vitrify it in an Instant, by evaporating all the Sulphur of it, which crackles, and flies up in a thick Smoke, whilst the Glass, that remains, can never be reduc'd into any other Form. That Gold can be reduc'd into a fine Powder, every Gold-Beater can inform us; and who can tell, but that Moses might have some particular Secret for doing this, which we know nothing of? By the Help of a File however he might grate it into a Dust, as fine as Flour, that is ground in a Mill. But the Rabbinical Reason, for his giving the People this Gold-Powder to drink, viz. that he might distinguish the Idolaters from the rest, (because as soon as they had drank, the Beards of the former turn'd red) is a little too whimsical to be regarded. Universal History, l. i. c. 7.

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Temper, which compell'd him to comply with their Demand. But *Moses's* Business was, to take Vengeance on the Idolaters; and therefore, turning from his Brother *Aaron*, he call'd such to his Aid, as had not been guilty in the late Rebellion, and, seeing some of the Tribe of *Levi* adjoin themselves to him, † he appointed them to take their Swords, to go through the Camp, and, without any Respect to Age or Quality, Friendship or Consanguinity, to kill all the *Ringleaders* of this idolatrous Defection, and their Adherents; which the *Levites* accordingly executed, so that, at this Time, there were about three thousand Persons slain. Nor did the *Levites*, in Consideration of this their laudable Zeal and Obedience, go long unrewarded: For, upon the Institution of the Priesthood, they were appointed to the Honour and Emoluments of that Office, though in Subordination to that of *Aaron* and his Posterity.

His Intercession for the People, and receiving from God fresh Tables of the Law.

THE People, in the mean Time, having seen this dreadful Example on the *Delinquents*, were not in a little Fear and Consternation. But *Moses*, the next Day, contented himself with reproving them for their Ingratitude and extreme Folly, and at the same Time, promis'd them, that he wou'd go up to the Mount again, and try † how far his Prayers wou'd prevail with the divine Mercy, to avert the Punish-

ment, which they justly deserv'd. To shew however how highly they had offended God by their wicked *Apostacy*, he took a *Tent*, and, pitching it out of the Camp at a good Distance, he call'd it *the Tabernacle of the Congregation*, whither the *cloudy Pillar* (to let them see that God wou'd no longer dwell among them) immediately repair'd; and whither *Moses*, whenever he wanted to consult the *divine Oracle*, was wont to resort. Nor was it long after this, that God, (to comfort and encourage him under all the *Fatigue*, that he had with an obstinate People) granted his Request, and shew'd him as much of his *Glory*, as his Nature was able to bear, and gave him fresh Orders to prepare two other Tables of Stone, and to come up again to him on the Mountain all alone. *Moses*, accordingly, early next Morning, repair'd to the Mountain, with the two Tables, and having prostrated himself before God, implor'd of him to pardon the Sins of his People; which God graciously condescended to do, and withal to make a farther Covenant with them, upon Condition, that they wou'd keep his *Commandments*; wou'd observe his *Sabbaths*, his *Passover*, and other appointed *Festivals*; and wou'd not worship the Gods of the *Canaanites*, nor make any Alliances with the People of the Country.

From Exod. xiii. to Chap. xxxiv. 24.

† This may be thought too hazardous an Undertaking, and, for a few *Levites* to kill 3000 of the People, impracticable; but as they had God's Warrant for what they did, and knew, at the same Time, how timorous Guilt is apt to make Men, they might be confident, that none wou'd have Courage to oppose them. Before that *Moses* call'd any *Avengers* to his Assistance, the Text tells us, that *he saw that the People were naked, for Aaron had made them naked to their Shame*, Exod. xxxii. 25. where, if by *Nakedness* we are (with some Expositors) to understand their Want of *Arms*, which they had laid aside, that they might be more light and nimble to dance about the Idol, it is plain, that the *Levites* might have less Trouble in slaying such a Number of People, loaded with Liquor perhaps, and (as it usually happens in the Conclusion of a Festival) weary with Dancing and Sports, and without any Weapons about them, to make Resistance. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

† *Moses* indeed was by Lineage and Descent of the Tribe of *Levi*, which, tho' it forfeited the *Primogeniture* and *Regalia*, by being concern'd in the Blood of the *Shechemites*, was nevertheless dignify'd with the *Priesthood*, which gave him a Right of approaching God, as an *Intercessor* for a rebellious, and backsliding People. *Aaron*, in Strictness, was both the High-Priest, and his Elder Brother, but, besides that, he, by his imprudent Compliance in the Business of the *Golden Calf*, had, at this Time, not only forfeited the Honour of *Mediation*, but flood himself in Need of an Atonement: There seems to be something in the Character, that is given of *Moses's* singular *Meekness*, that might entitle him to the Spirit of Intercession, and make the younger, in this Office, be preferr'd before the elder. *Bibliotheca Bibl.* Append. of the Occas. Annot.

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xiii. to Chap.
xxxiv. 24.

The O B J E C T I O N.

“ THE Kindness of God to the *Israe-*
“ *lites*, in giving them the Posses-
“ sion of the Land of *Canaan*, was very
“ remarkable; but, since he intended it at
“ first, why did he delay it so long? *Hope*
“ *deferred makes the Heart sick*, says *Solo-*
“ *mon*; and to be *forty Years* in executing
“ what might have been done in *forty*
“ *Days*, is hardly consistent either with
“ the Wisdom or Goodness of God. Be-
“ tween *Egypt* and *Canaan* (if we may
“ believe * *Philo*) there is not above
“ three Days Journey; and therefore it
“ looks a little strange and unaccountable,
“ that God shou’d not march his People
“ directly thither, and settle them at once,
“ rather than lead them aside into a barren
“ Wilderness, and there carry them in a
“ *Wild-goose-Chase* for the Space of almost
“ half a *Century*, always pester’d with
“ their Complaints, and forc’d to feed
“ them at the Expence of Miracles. It
“ can hardly be thought, from the Tenour
“ of their History, but that his particular
“ Providence attended them, wherever
“ they went: (a) As Miracles however
“ are not to be multiply’d without a mani-
“ fest Necessity, there is no Reason for
“ our thinking, that God himself went
“ before them, during their Travels in
“ the Wilderness, in a *visible Pillar of*
“ *Fire and Smoak*, since the whole Matter
“ (which the *Jews* make so much boast
“ of) might be no more, *than a kind of*
“ ambulatory Beacon, or a *Huge*, portable
“ Fire, under the Direction of a proper
“ Officer, and in a fit Machine, highly
“ elevated on a Pole, which was carry’d
“ before the first Line of the Camp, and
“ from thence cou’d be seen by all the rest.
“ This was a customary Practice, in waste
“ and desolate Countries, for the Conve-
“ niency of Travelling; and therefore we

“ may suppose, that the *Israelites*, when
“ they enter’d the Wilderness, in Confor-
“ mity to other Nations, made use of the
“ same Expedient; and that, to some such
“ portable *Fire* as this, whose *Flame*, but
“ not its *Smoak*, might be very far seen by
“ *Night*, and whose *Smoak*, but not its
“ *Flame*, might be perceiv’d at a great
“ Distance by *Day*, all the strange Things,
“ which are said of the different *Phases*
“ of this pretended miraculous Pillar, may
“ with great Facility be referr’d.

“ *MOSES*, no doubt, in fundry Re-
“ spects, was no mean Politician; and there-
“ fore he cou’d not but know, that the
“ Pretence of a divine Revelation wou’d
“ give his Laws a better Sanction among
“ the People, and so, to prepare the Way,
“ he devis’d the terrible *Scene* of God’s
“ descending upon Mount *Sinai*, and
“ abiding there, in *Smoak* and *Thunderings*,
“ and *Lightning*, while himself went up
“ to receive his Will, but prohibited all
“ the rest (except his Brother *Aaron*, who
“ was let into the *Mystery*) (b) under the
“ Penalty of immediate Death, to ap-
“ proach the Mountain: For had they
“ been permitted to do this, the Secret
“ had been soon found out, and the Mira-
“ cle spoil’d, which in all Probability, (c)
“ was Nothing more than a *Vulcano*, or
“ Irruption of Fire out of the Top of the
“ Mountain, whercof he knowing the
“ Cause, took the Advantage, and palm’d
“ it upon the People for the tremendous
“ Presence of God, attended with his *Hosts*
“ of *Angels*.

“ AND indeed, considering the Nature
“ of the *Laws*, which he deliver’d to the
“ People, we have small Reason to suppose
“ that God had any Hand in them; since
“ they are many of them *absurd* and *ridi-*
“ *culous*, some contrary to common Justice,
“ and

* De Vita *Mosis*, Lib. i. p. 627.

(a) *Toland’s* *Ilodegus*.

(b) Exod. xix. 12, 13.

(c) *Nicholls’s* Conference with a Theist, p. 273.

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“ and others Nothing else, but *Egyptian*
“ Rites reviv'd. For, even in *the moral*
“ Part of them, what can be more unrighteous,
“ than (d) God's *visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation?*
“ In the *Political*, what more unjust, than the setting up *Asylums* for every
“ Rogue and Ruffian to flee to? What more *cruel*, than the *Lex Talionis*, or
“ a Permission to take Revenge in cold Blood? What more *ridiculous*, than to
“ prohibit Men's sowing *Maslin*, or wearing *Linsey-Woolsey*, or gravely to decree,
“ that an *Ox* and an *Ass* shou'd not be yoked together? And as for the *Ceremonial*, (e) the *Urim* and *Thummim*,
“ the *Ark* and the *Cherubims*, the *High Priests Vestments*, and almost every Ordinance in the Worship of the *Tabernacle*, are manifestly borrow'd from the
“ *Egyptians*.

“ *MOSES* perhaps knew better, and wrote only according to the Conceptions
“ of the Vulgar, whom he purpos'd to keep in Ignorance; or otherwise, we cannot
“ but say, that he discovers gross Notions of God, when (f) he talks of his *Face*,
“ his *Back-parts*, and his *covering him with his Hand*; and, when he wishes
“ (g) *to be blotted out of the Book, that God had written*, (which some suppose
“ to mean his *eternal Damnation*) he seems to be absolutely *profane* and *irreligious*,
“ devoid of all Fear of God, as well as all Sense of Danger in a *future State*.

“ THE less Reason we have to wonder, that we find *Aaron*, his Brother and
“ Companion in this Affair, and who was now left *Regent* in his Absence, so
“ easily complying with the impious Request of the People, and, instead of
“ remonstrating to the idolatrous Motion, with his own Hands making them an
“ *Idol*, and with his own Mouth proclaiming a *Festival* in Honour of it:
“ But why he shou'd think of a *Calf*, above all other Creatures, to be an *hieroglyphic*

“ *glyphic* of the Deity, or why the People, who had seen so much of the *Handy-work* of God, shou'd be so overjoy'd at the setting up the Figure of so *stupid* an
“ Animal, to be the Object of their Worship, may justly raise our Astonishment and Admiration.”

THAT in the Desarts of *Arabia*, and such extended Plains, (for there were no Cities, Rivers, or Mountains, for Land-Marks) it was a general Custom, before the Invention of the *Compass*, to carry Fire before Armies, in order to direct their March; and that (notwithstanding the present Use of the *Compass*) the Guidance of Fire is practis'd among the *Caravans* in the *East*, and by the great Number of *Pilgrims*, who go every Year from *Grand Cairo* in *Egypt*, to *Mecca* in *Arabia*, cannot, by any one, that is acquainted either with *ancient* or *modern History*, be deny'd: And had the sole Intent of the *cloudy Pillar* been, to guide, and conduct the *Israelites* in their Journies, there might have been more Grounds for asserting, that it was a *mere Machine of human Contrivance*, and had Nothing *miraculous* or *supernatural* in it. But, when it shall appear, that this *Pillar of a Cloud* was of much greater Use to the Children of *Israel*, than barely to conduct them; that in it resided a superior Power, upon whom the Name and Attributes of God are conferr'd; that from it proceeded *Oracles*, and *Directions* what the People were to do, and *Plagues* and *Punishments*, when they had done amiss; and that to it are ascrib'd such Motions and Actions, as cannot, with any Propriety of Speech, be apply'd to any *natural* Fire; it will, from hence, I hope, be concluded, that this *Guidance* of the Cloud was a real Miracle; its *Substance* quite different from that of *portable* Fire preceding Armies; and its *Conductor* something more than a mere Man.

THE first Mention, that is made of this *Phenomenon*, is in the thirteenth Chapter of *Exodus*, where *Moses*, describing the
Rout,

From Exod.
xiii. to Chap.
xxxiv. 24.

Answer'd by
showing that
the miraculous
Cloud was no
Machine of human
Contrivance.

(d) Exod. xx. 5.
xxxii. 32.

(e) Spencer, de Legibus Heb. lib. iii.

(f) Exod. xxxiii. 20. &c.

(g) Chap.

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1491, &c.

Rout, which the *Israelites* pursu'd, tells us, that (b) they took their Journey from Succoth, and encamp'd at Etham, at the Edge of the Wilderness, and the Lord went before them, by Day, in a Pillar of a Cloud, and, by Night, in a Pillar of Fire: And what we are to understand by the Lord, that went before them, we are advertis'd in another Place; (i) Behold I send my Angel before thee, to keep thee in the Way, and to bring thee into the Place, which I have prepar'd: Beware of him, and obey his Voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon thy Transgression, for my Name is in him, i. e. my Name *Jehovah*, which is the proper and incommunicable Title of God. The next Place, wherein we find this Pillar of a Cloud mention'd, is in the 24th Chapter; (k) and the Angel of God, which went before the Camp of Israel, removed, and went behind them, and the Pillar of the Cloud went from before their Face, and stood behind them, and it came between the Camp of the Egyptians, and the Camp of Israel, and was a Cloud and Darkneſs to them, but it gave Light to these. There is, in the same Book, another Place, where this Pillar is taken notice of; and that is, in the 33d Chapter, where God, being highly offended at the People's Impiety in making the golden Calf, refuses to conduct them any longer himself, and proposes to depute an Angel to supply his Place: (l) When the People heard these evil Tidings, they mourned, — and it came to pass, as Moses entered into the Tabernacle, the cloudy Pillar descended, and stood at the Door of the Tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. All the People saw the cloudy Pillar at the Tabernacle Door, and they rose up, and worshipp'd every Man at his Tent Door. We have Occasion to mention but one Place more, and that is in the 16th Chapter of Numbers, where the People murmur'd for the Loss of Korah, and his Company: (m) And it came to pass, that when the

Congregation was gathered against Moses, and against Aaron, they looked towards the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and behold the Cloud covered it, and the Glory of the Lord appeared; and Moses and Aaron came before the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, get you up from among the Congregation, that I may consume them, as in a Moment, and they fell upon their Faces; and Moses said unto Aaron, take a Censer, and put Fire therein from off the Altar, and put on Incense, and go quickly into the Congregation, and make an Atonement for them, for there is Wrath gone out from the Lord, the Plague is begun. Now, from a bare Recital of these Passages, we cannot but observe, that the *Israelites* Pillar made quite another Appearance, than any combustible Matter, when set on Fire, and carry'd upon a Pole, can be suppos'd to do; that in this Pillar resided a Person of divine Character and Perfections, and therefore call'd the Lord, the Angel, the Angel of the Lord, and the Angel of his Presence, &c. that this Person was invested with a Power of demanding Homage and Observance, of both punishing and pardoning Transgressions, and to whom, even Moses and Aaron, (as well as the rest of the Congregation) might fall down on their Faces, and pay Obedience, without the Imputation of Idolatry. The whole Tenour of the Narration, in short, seems to denote, that every one in the Congregation look'd upon the Pillar, as something awful and tremendous, and the Person, residing therein, above the Rank and Dignity of any created Essence: And therefore the most general Opinion is, that he, to whom these divine Appellations, divine Powers, and divine Honours are ascrib'd, was the eternal Son of God, with a Troop of blessed Angels attending him in bright and luminous Forms; and who, either by the Display, or Contraction of their Forms, cou'd make the Cloud, they inhabited, either condense, or expand itself, either put on

From Exod.
xiii. to Chap.
xxxiv. 24.

(b) Num. xxxiii. 5, 6.
(m) Num. xvi. 47, &c.

(i) Exod. xxiii. 20, 21.

(k) Chap. 19, 20.

(l) Chap. xxxiii. 4, &c.

A. M.
2513, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1491, &c.

on a *dark*, or *radiant* Appearance, according as the great *Captain* of their *Host* signify'd his Pleasure. For to suppose that mere Fire, without any *supernatural* Direction, cou'd appear in different Forms, at the same Time, with *Darkness* to one Sort of People, and *Light* to another, is a Thing incongruous to its Nature.

FOR how many Purposes this *miraculous* Pillar might serve the *Israelites*, it wou'd be Presumption to determine; but this we may say with Safety, — That, besides its guiding them in their Journey, (n) it was of Use to defend them from their Enemies, that they might not assault them; of Use to cover them from the Heat of the Sun in the Wilderness, where there were few Trees, and no Houses to shelter them; and of Use to convey the divine Will, and to be, as it were, a standing *Oracle*, whereunto they might resort upon all Occasions. In this Cloud, we are told expressly, that (o) the *Lord* appear'd from the *Tabernacle*; from this Cloud, that (p) he call'd *Aaron* and *Miriam* to come before him; and, out of this Cloud again, that he sent forth the Expresses of his *Wrath*, as well as the Tokens of his *Love*, among the whole Congregation: And therefore this Cloud cou'd, at that Time, be nothing else, but the *Vehicle* of God, as we may call it, or the Place of his *majestick* Appearance. Nor is the Conjecture improbable, that from this very Instance, the Poets first took the Hint of making their Gods descend in a *Cloud*, and array'd with a bright *Effulgency*.

HOWEVER this be, it is certain, that the *Jews* were persuaded of the Divinity of their Guide; otherwise, they wou'd not have express'd such undissembled Sorrow and Concern, upon hearing the News of his Intention to leave them: Nor cou'd *Moses*, with all his Authority, have ever prevail'd with them to wander so long in the Wilderness, expos'd to so many Dangers and Hardships, had they been satis-

fy'd, that it was no more, than a Man, with some Fire, elevated upon a Pole, that was their *Conductor*. It may be allow'd indeed, that a Multitude of such fiery *Machines* might be of Service to an Army in a March; but the Thing is utterly inconceivable, how a Company of *six hundred thousand* Men, besides Women and Children, and no small Number of *Associates*, together with all their Cattle, cou'd receive any great Benefit from only one of these, which at a moderate Distance, wou'd diminish into a small Light, and at a larger be quite lost; or, every Moment, was in Danger of being blown aside by the Wind, or extinguish'd by the Rain.

THE Scriptures every where represent the *Israelites* going out of *Egypt* with a *high Hand*, marching in a regular Order, and (q) covered by God, *in the Day, with a Cloud*, and led, *all the Night through, with a Light of Fire*; but a sufficient Company of *Link-Boys*, plac'd in a regular Order to illuminate each Column, as they mov'd, wou'd have certainly been of more Use, and made a much better Appearance, than this pretended Mixture of *Smoak* and *Flame smothering, from an Iron Pot, at the End of a long Pole*. For, from my Heart, I cannot conceive, what Manner of Comparison there can be, between the dark, *fuliginous* Smoak, arising from a *culinary* Fire, and the glorious, heavenly, and bright Appearance of (r) *that burning Pillar of Fire, which* (as the Author of the Book of *Wisdom* expresses it) *was both a Guide of their unknown Journey, and an harmless Sun to entertain them honourably*.

THE Scripture indeed assigns but one Reason for God's conducting the *Israelites* by the Way of the Wilderness, (which was so much about) to the Land of *Canaan*, and that is, — An Apprehension that the *Philistines* (through whose Country they were to go) being a bold and warlike People, wou'd, in all Probability, have disputed the Passage with them,

From Exod. xiii. to Chap. xxxiv. 24.

Why God led the Israelites aside, thro' the Wilderness.

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which

(n) *Patrick's Commentary*.
and cv. 39.

(o) Deut. xxxi. 15.
(r) *Wisd.* xviii. 3.

(p) Numb. xii. 5.

(q) *Psal.* lxxviii. 14.

A. M.
2513, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1491, &c.

which the others, destitute of Arms, (as they were) and having their Spirits broken with a long Servitude, were in no Condition to make good : But, as the Almighty Power of their *Conductor* was sufficient to make them superior to all such Obstacles, we may well suppose, that a farther End, which the divine Providence might have herein, was to manifest his Glory and Goodness, by his constant Attendance upon them in this *luminous* Appearance, and by the many wonderful Works, which he did, to oblige them to his Service.

ACCORDING to the Course of the Country, *Moses* might have march'd the People a much shorter Way ; but then, we had heard nothing of the *Angel of God's Presence* visibly preceding them ; nothing of his dividing the Sea to facilitate their Passage ; nothing of his overwhelming their Enemies in those very Floods, which to them were a Kind of Wall on each Side ; nothing of his drawing out Rivers of Water from the stony Rock ; nothing of his (s) *sending down Manna upon them, and giving them Food from Heaven* ; nothing of his *raining Flesh, as thick as Dust, and feathered Fowls, like as the Sand of the Sea* ; nothing of his amazing Descent upon Mount Sinai, when, in the lofty Words of the *Psalmist*, (t) *he bowed the Heavens, and came down, and it was dark under his Feet ; he rode upon the Cherubims, and did fly ; he came flying upon the Wings of the Wind ; he made Darkness his secret Place, his Pavilion round about him with dark Water, and thick Clouds to cover him : There went a Smoak out of his Presence, Hail-stones, and Coals of Fire, so that the Earth trembled and quaked, the very Foundations also of the Hills shook, and were removed.* The Wilderness, in short, was the Scene, which God had made choice of, for the Display of his almighty Power and Goodness : There it was, that he *laid bare his Arm*, as he calls it, to the *Israelites* ; that every Day, he took care

of their Meat, and Drink, and Indeficiency of their Cloathing ; and had he not detain'd them there so long, he had not been so kind. It may be consider'd farther, that, before this People were to be admitted into the Possession of the Inheritance, which God had promis'd them, all Matters were to be adjusted between him and them ; and, to this Purpose, *Laws* were to be given, *Ordinances* instituted, and *Covenants* seal'd ; but a Work of this Importance cou'd no where be so commodiously transacted, as in the Retirement of the Wilderness. Here it was, that God, in the Bush talking with *Moses*, gave it as a Token of his Promise, that the People, after their Deliverance, shou'd come to *Mount Horeb*, and (u) there *worship him* ; and fit it was, that such an Engagement on God's Part shou'd now receive its Accomplishment. And, since, it was no more than requisite, that a Nation, design'd for such peculiar Favours from God, shou'd be held some Time in a State of Probation, before they were admitted to it, and until the People, whom they were appointed to reject, had fill'd up *the Measure of their Iniquity*, and were ripe for Extirpation ; therefore it is, that *Moses* calls upon them (x) *to remember all the Way, which the Lord their God led them, for these forty Years in the Wilderness, to humble them, and to prove them, and to know what was in their Hearts, whether they would keep his Commandments or no.*

THESE Commandments, it must be own'd, were deliver'd to the *Israelites* with all the Ensigns of Horror, which the *Psalmist*, so lately quoted, has describ'd ; but that there is no Ground to suspect any Deceit in this wonderful Occurrence, is manifest from *Moses's* Dealing so openly with the People in this Matter, and suffering them to go up into the Mountain, after the Lord had departed from it. (y) *When the Trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the Mount.* This is the Signal, which God himself gives them ; where-

From Exod.
xiii. to Chap.
xxxiv. 24.

No Collision in
the Mount,
whence God
gave his
Laws.

as,

(t) Psal. lxxviii. 24, &c. (u) Psal. xviii. 9, &c. (v) Exod. iii. 12. (x) Deut. viii. 2. (y) Exod. xix. 13.

A. M.
2513, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1491, &c.

as, had there been any Fallacy in the *Phænomenon*, *Moses* wou'd have debarr'd them from going up forever. And therefore, as we need not doubt, but that several, upon this Signal, went up; we cannot but think, that the Cheat wou'd have soon been discover'd, had there been any Marks of a *natural Irruption* of Fire discernable upon the Top of the Mountain.

THOSE, who give us an Account of *Vulcanos*, or burning Mountains, do all agree in this, (as the Nature of the Thing indeed seems to require it) (z) that, on their Tops they have always an open *Mouth*, (which the Antients call'd *Crater*) through which they belch out their Flames; and that, after the Fire is expended, it will still appear in the Form of a monstrous *Gap*, even unto the End of the World. And therefore, since all *Travellers*, both antient and modern, who have taken an accurate Survey * of the Mount *Sinai*, cou'd never discern the least Appearance of any such Gap, but, on the contrary, a continu'd Surface, whereon there stands,

at present, a little Chapel of *St Catharine*; all this suppos'd Contrivance of *Moses*, to make a natural *Vulcano* pass upon the People for the *majestick Presence* of God upon the sacred Mount, can be deem'd no other than a crude, nonsensical Fiction, wherein the Lovers of Infidelity are found to shew their Ignorance, as well as their Malice, when they pretend to tax this Relation of *Moses*, representing God's Appearance in a Flame of Fire, in Thunder, and Lightning, &c. with any Incongruity, or invent any groundless Stories to account for it; since Nothing can be more agreeable to the antient *Divinity*, or common Notions of the *Heathen World*, * than that the Apparition of their Gods, whenever they descend upon the Earth, is usually attended with such like Harbingers.

SUNDRY *Law-givers*, no doubt, have pretended to a *Familiarity* with their respective Deities, as well as *Moses* did with the God of *Israel*; but, (besides the Attestation of *Miracles* in his Favour, which

From Exod.
xiii. to Chap.
xxiv. 24.

No Incongruity
in these Laws.

(z) *Nicholls's Conference*, Part II. p. 279.

* The Mountains of *Sinai* and *Horeb* are promiscuously us'd by the sacred *Historian*, by Reason of their Contiguity; and yet it is certain, that they are two different Places. *Sinai*, (which the *Arabians*, at this Day, call *Tor*, or the *Mountain*, by way of Eminence, or otherwise, *Gibel Mousa*, the Mount of *Moses*) stands in a Kind of *Peninsula*, form'd by two Arms of the *Red-Sea*, one of which stretches out towards the North, and is call'd the *Gulph of Kolsom*; the other towards the East, and is call'd the *Gulph of Elan*, or the *Elanitis-Sea*. *Sinai* is, at least, one third Part higher than *Horeb*, and of a much more difficult Ascent; whose Top terminates in an uneven and rugged Space, capable of containing about 60 Persons. Here (as we said) is built the little Chapel of *St Catharine*, where it is thought that the Body of this Saint rested for 330 Years, but was afterwards remov'd to the Church, which is at the Foot of the Mountain. Not far from this Chapel issues out a Fountain of good fresh Water, which is look'd upon as miraculous, because it is not conceivable, how Water can rise from the Brow of so high a Mountain. *Horeb* is to the West of *Sinai*, so that at Sun-rising, the Shadow of *Sinai* entirely covers *Horeb*. At the Foot of this Mount there is a Fountain, which supplies Water to the Monastery of *St Catharine*; and about five or six Paces from it, they shew us a Stone, about four or five Feet high, and three broad, which, as they tell us, is the very same, from whence *Moses* caus'd the Waters to gush out. It is of a spotted grey Colour, stands by itself, as it were, and where no other Rock appears, and has twelve Holes about a Foot wide, from whence it is thought that the Water came forth, which the *Israelites* did drink. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the Word *Sinai*.

* That Fire and Lightning shou'd attend the Presence of God, is a Notion so frequent in the most antient and oriental *Theology*, that it might possibly give occasion to the Worship of Fire among the *Chaldeans* and *Persians*; to the *Magi*, among the *Cappadocians*, call'd *Purrethi*, which *Strabo* mentions; and to the *Vestal Fires* among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, as well as ancient *Britons*.

Ἡνίκα βλέψης μορφῆς ἄτερ εὐμερον πῦρ
Δαμπόμενον σκιρτήσδον ὅλη κατὰ βένθεα Κάσμου
Καῦθι πυρὸς φωνήν.

Say the *Chaldaick Oracles*; And

as for *Earth-quakes*, or Shaking of Mountains, this is no more, than what all Nations suppose have ever come to pass, upon God's manifesting himself at any Time; for it is not only the *Psalmist*, who tells us, that the *Earth shook*, and the *Heaven dropped at the Presence of God*; but in the Description, which *Virgil* gives us of the Approach of *Phœbus*, he does, in a Manner, translate the Words of *Moses*.

Tremere omnia visa repente,
Luminaque, Laurusque Dei; totusque moveri
Mons circum, & mugire Adytis Cortina reclusis.

A. M.
2513, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1491, &c.

which none of them laid any Claim to) we may venture to put his Character upon this Issue, viz. the Excellency of his Laws, above what *Athens*, or *Lacedemon*, or even *Rome* itself ever had to produce. For, what a compleat System of all religious and social Virtues do the *Ten Commandments*, deliver'd on the Mount, contain, taking them (as we ought to do) in their *positive*, as well as *negative* Sense! In the *second* of these indeed, there is a Passage, of *God's visiting the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children*, which seems to bear a little hard upon his Mercy and Justice; but this is entirely owing to the Mistake of our Translation. For, if the Preposition *Lamed*, and *Hal*, which we there render *upon*, may, (a) according to the Sense of some *Criticks*, be render'd *by*, or *in favour of*, then may the Words, now under Consideration, be properly translated, *God's punishing the Wickedness of the Father, BY or IN FAVOUR of the Children*. In the former of these Senses, (b) *David's* Murther and Adultery was justly punish'd *by* his favourite, but wicked Son *Abshalom*; and, in the latter, the meaning will be, that God frequently inflicts remarkable Judgments upon a wicked Father, in order to deter his Children, even to the *third and fourth Generation*, from the like Provocations.

Nor in the
Appointment of
Cities of Re-
fuge.

WHAT more *just*, as well as *merciful* Constitution cou'd there be devis'd, than to ordain *Cities of Refuge*, for the innocent *Man-slayer* to fly to, thereby to avoid the Rage and ungovernable Fury of the dead Man's *Relations*, (who, according to the Custom of these Times, were wont immediately to revenge their Kindred's Death) and thereby to gain Time to prepare a Plea in his own Vindication; which, if it was found insufficient, and the Man adjudg'd guilty of *wilful Murther*, cou'd not according to the Tenor of the same Law, secure him from being dragg'd even (c) *from the Horns of the Altar*?

AN Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth, may seem to us, who live under a milder Dispensation, a rigid and severe Decree; but then we may observe, that it was no more, than what was thought reasonable in other Nations, and obtain'd a Place among * the celebrated *Roman Laws of the twelve Tables*. It was, in some Measure, necessary to restrain quarrelsome and unruly Tempers from Violence; and, in Case that Death did not ensue, the Law was always mitigated, and the *Talio* commuted for a *pecuniary Mulct*.

From Exod.
xiii. to Chap.
xxxiv. 24.

SEVERAL of the *Jewish Laws*, which to us may seem frivolous, had a valid Reason for their Institution at first, if it were but to discriminate them from other Nations, and to guard them against the common Infection of Idolatry. The Wearing of *Linsey-woolsey* was probably a proud, fantastical Fashion of the *Heathens* at that Time, which the *Jews* were forbid to imitate. An Ox and an *Ass* were not to be coupled together in the same Carriage, with this merciful Intent, that one Beast of greater Strength might not strain a poor Creature of *less* beyond its Ability; and, as Sowing the Ground with *mix'd Seeds*, in some Mens Opinion, is an effectual Way to wear it out, it was therefore a Practice prohibited, in Commiseration (if I may so say) to *our Mother Earth*, as well as to set Bounds to the Husband-man's Covetousness; though, as others imagine, these three Injunctions, as they stand all together in the same Place, might perhaps have something *emblematical* in them, besides the Precept, to make Men have a greater Abhorrence of all *venereal Mixtures*, contrary to Nature.

Valid Reasons
for seemingly
frivolous
Laws.

It is an Injunction, which God often inculcates to his People the *Jews*, (d) *After the Doing of the Land of Egypt, wherein ye dwell, ye shall not do; and after the Doing of the Land of Canaan, whither I bring you, ye shall not do: I am the Lord your*

No Resem-
blance between
the Egyptian
and Jewish
Ceremonies.

(a) *Le Clerc's Commentary in Locum.*

(b) 2 Sam. xi. and some following Chapters.

(c) Exod. xxi. 14.

* *Aulus Gellius* sets down this Law of the *twelve Tables* in this Manner. SI MEMBRUM RUPERIT, NI CUM. RO. PACIT. TALIO. RESTO. *Noct. Attic. Lib. xx. c. 1.*

(d) Lev. xviii. 3, 4.

A. M. 2513. Ec.
Ant. Christ. 1491. Ec.
your God, ye shall therefore keep my Statutes, and my Judgments; which Words seem to imply, not only that the idolatrous Rites of the Gentiles were forbidden, but that those of God's Appointment were made in direct Opposition to them: And to this Purpose we find (e) the Roman Historian representing the Jews, as a People, whose religious Rites were so contrary to all the World besides, that what, in others, was most sacred, they accounted profane, and allow'd, as lawful, what other Nations were wont to abominate.

Now, if the Mosaic Laws and Ceremonies were given to the Jews, as Barriers against Idolatry, and formally repugnant to the Customs of the Heathens, we may appeal to any sober and considerate Man, whether it be consistent with good Sense, or congruous to Truth and Reason, that God shou'd make Laws, exactly contrary to the Egyptians, and other Pagan Nations, shewing thereby, that he hated the very Semblance of their Rites, and yet, at the same Time, take the Rise of his Institutions from the Customs and Practice of these Pagans: Nay, whether it gives us not such an Idea of God, as Reverence to his tremendous Majesty will not suffer me to name, (f) to represent him making up all the vain, ludicrous, superstitious, impious, impure, idolatrous, magical, and diabolical Customs, which had been first invented, and afterwards practis'd, by the most barbarous Nations, and out of these patching up a great Part of the Religion, which he appointed his own People.

It cannot well otherwise be, but that, in Matters of Tradition, which have equally descended among all Nations perhaps from Noah, a Man of some Learning and Fancy may form a Similitude between the religious Rites and Usages of one People with another; but it wou'd really rack

one's Invention to find out the great Agreement between the Jewish High-Priest, and the Egyptian Chief Justice; since the Urim and Thummim of the one was a Piece of Cloth, about a Span square, beset with Jewels, but the Alathea, (as they call it) of the other, was a golden Medal, representing the Figure of a Bird; since the Robe of the one was made of scarlet, blue, and purple woollen Cloth, only embroider'd with Wreaths of fine Linnen; but the Garment of the other was made of Linnen only, because it was unlawful; (g) as Herodotus tells us, for the Egyptian Magistrates to wear any Thing else.

WHEN the Tables of the Covenant were deliver'd to Moses, it seems no more than requisite, that some Care shou'd be taken of them; and, if so, what cou'd be a more apposite Contrivance for that Purpose than a Chest? Moses, even by his Enemies, is reputed a very cunning Man; but they certainly mean it as a Compliment, and not his Due, if they think him not capable of so small a Contrivance as this, without copying from the Egyptian Gista, wherein the Priests were wont to lock up their religious Trinkets from the Eyes of the Vulgar: And as for the Cherubims, which over-shadow'd this Ark, there certainly seems nothing analogous, but rather a particular Opposition in these to the Egyptian Idolatry. For, whereas their Temples were generally fill'd with the Images of Monkeys, Calves, and Serpents, the Representations of real Animals, which, (according to the natural Deism of those Times) they fancy'd to be Parts and Exhibitions of the Deity; Moses here † orders Figures to be made, which had little or no Resemblance of any Thing in the World, and were expressive of the angelical Nature only, which every one knew was subordinate to God's. So little Congruity is there to be

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found

(e) Tacitus, l. viii. c. 4.

(f) Edward's Survey of Religion, Vol. I.

(g) Lib. ii. c. 37.

† What the particular Figure of these Cherubims was, it is hard to imagine at this Distance. Grotius indeed, and some others, have ingeniously conjectur'd, from the Creatures seen by Ezekiel in his Vision, Chap. i. 5. and x. 15. which he calls Cherubim, that they had the Face of a Man, the Wings of an Eagle, the Mane of a Lion, and the Feet of an Ox; and by this they will have the Dispensations of divine Providence, by the Ministry of Angels, symbolically represented; the Lion, exhibiting the Severity of his Justice; the Eagle, the Celerity of his Bounty; the Man, his Goodness and Mercy; and the Ox, the Slowness of his Punishment, which comes (as the Greek Proverb says) *Boatip wofa*, with an Ox's Foot. Nicholls's Conference, Part II.

A. M.
2513, *Est.*
Ant. Christ.
1491, *Est.*

Moses's Ex-
pression con-
cerning God
vindicated.

found between the *Egyptian* and *Jewish* Laws and Ceremonies, * less perhaps, than might be discover'd in several other Nations, were we dispos'd to be prolix upon this Subject. But let us return to their *Legislator*.

THAT God, who is a pure Spirit, eternal, and omnipresent, has neither Body nor Parts, nor any Affections thereunto belonging, is a Proposition, which our Reason cannot but assent to; and yet, when we set ourselves to *explain* (as we call it) the Divine Nature and Attributes, we soon find ourselves under a Necessity to borrow Expressions from *corporeal* Beings, the better to accommodate the Loftiness of our Subject to our Readers Comprehension. For, unless we cou'd contrive a perfect Set of *new* Words, there is no speaking at all of the Deity without using our *old* ones in a *tralatitious* Sense. *Providence* and *Mercy*, for Instance, are two known Attributes of God; but, if we respect their *original* Use, and do not take them in a *metaphorical* Meaning, they are altogether as absurd, when apply'd to God, as are his *Eye*, or *Hand*, or *Back-parts*, in their grossest Sense. For, how improper is it, literally speaking, to say, that God *looks before him*, like Men when they act cautiously; or, that he has that *relenting of Heart*, or *yearning of Bowels*, which merciful Men feel at the Sight of a miserable Object? The Truth is, Languages were compos'd to maintain an Inter-course with one another, and not to treat of the Nature of that Being, who *dwelleth in Light that is inaccessible*. No Form of Words, be they never so exquisite and well chosen, can reach those transcendent Perfections, that are *unutterable*; and therefore, if we consider the low Capacity

of the People, to whom, the great Poverty of the Language, in which, and the vast Sublimity of the Subject, about which, *Moses* wrote, we shall have less Occasion to blame this *metaphorical* Way of expressing the Divine Nature, which, upon Experiment, he certainly found best adapted, both to inform the Understanding, and animate the Affections of the People; while a Number of dry, *scholastick*, and abstracted Terms wou'd have laid flat upon their Minds, and serv'd only to amuse, and confound them.

THO', therefore, it must be acknowledg'd, that there is indeed an Impropriety in Language, when corporeal Parts, or Actions are imputed to the Deity; yet, since the Narrowness of the *Hebrew* Tongue wou'd not furnish *Moses* with a Sufficiency of abstract Terms, and the Dullness of the People (had he had a Sufficiency) would not have permitted him to employ them; he was under a Necessity of speaking according to the *common Usage*, which was secur'd from giving the People any gross Ideas of God, because these Phrases were always understood to be spoken *ἀνθρωποπαθῶς*; and therefore (b) a *Jewish Rabb*in acquaints us, that whenever they meet with an Expression concerning the Deity of this Nature, they are us'd to interpose a *Cabiacal*, or, *if I may so speak*.

INTERPRETERS, indeed, are at some Variance what we are to understand by the *Hand*, *Face*, and *Hinder-Parts* of God. "The *Face* of God, (i) says an *ingenious Glossary*, signifies his Essence, "before the Beginning of the World, "and his *Hinder-Parts*, his Creation and "Providence, in the Government of "the World:" But (k) *Maimonides* is of Opinion, that these Words may be interpreted


* To this Purpose, we are inform'd that the *Brachmans*, the *Indian* Priests, wear Bells about them like the *Jewish* High-Priest, were only allow'd to go into the inward Part of the Temple, and were, like him, oblig'd to marry Virgins. *Slaves* there have their Ears bor'd through; a perpetual *Light* is kept in their Temples, and *Cakes* are set before their Idols, like *Show-Bread*. Nay, even the barbarous *Tartars* have many Things not unlike the *Jews*, for they celebrate their New Moons with Songs and Compotations; they bewail their Dead thirty Days; they breed no Hogs, and punish Adultery with Death. The like may be said of the People of the New World. Those of *Yucatan* are circumcis'd; those of *Mexico* keep a perpetual Fire in their Temples; and the *Charibbeans* celebrate the New Moon with the Sound of a Trumpet, and abstain from Swine's Flesh: And therefore, if a Similitude in Ceremonies is admitted as a valid Argument, we may as well say, that the *Jews* had their Laws and religious Ordinances from any of these, as that they had them from the *Egyptians*. *Nicholl's Conference*, Part II.

(b) Quoted by *Hottinger* in his *Dissert. Theolog. Philol.* Part I. c. 21.

(i) *Elias Cretensis*.

(k) *Mores Novus*.



To the Right Reverend Father  in God FRANCIS Lord Bishop of
CHICHESTER. This Plate is most humbly inscribed by his Lordship's
most dutifull son and Servant
Thomas Stackhouse

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preted according to the *Targum*, viz. That God made his *Majesty*, i. e., an exceedingly bright Representation of himself, (though not in its full Glory) pass before *Moses*, in so much Splendor, as human Nature cou'd bear, which may be term'd his *Back-Parts*; but not in his unveil'd *Brightness*, which may signify his *Face*, and, (as the Apostle speaks) is *inaccessible*; and (l) the *Hand*, where-with God cover'd him, while he *passed by*, may probably denote a *Cloud*, which God cast about him, that he might not be struck dead by the inconceivable Force and Refulgency of those Rays, which came from the *Face*, or full Lustre of the divine Majesty.

IN this Sense the antient *Jews* cou'd not but understand their Legislator, when they found him conveying sublime Truths under outward and sensible Representations. For, to clear him from all unjust Imputation, we need but call to mind the glorious Descriptions he gives, almost every where, but especially in *Deuteronomy*, of the Deity, and what Pains he takes, to deter them from making any Representation of it, under any Form whatever, by reminding them, that when God was pleas'd to display his Glory upon Mount *Sinai*, at the Delivering of the Ten Commandments, they saw no Shape or Likeness, but only heard his dreadful Voice. (m) These so frequent Inculcations may therefore be look'd upon as so many Intimations given them, in what Sense they were to understand all those other Expressions, which he had been forc'd to accommodate to their

Capacity, i. e. not in a *literal*, but in such a one, as was becoming the Deity, and suitable to the Dignity of the Subject.

Moses, no doubt, was a good Governor, and zealously affected for the Welfare of his People; but we injure his Memory much, if we think him, either so ignorant of a future State, or so negligent of his own Salvation, as to wish himself *damn'd*, in his Deprecation of God's Judgments, for their Salvation. The Case is this. — The *Israelites*, in making a golden Calf to worship, had highly offended God: God renounces all Relation to them, and, in his Displeasure, threatens, either to abandon, or destroy them; whereupon *Moses* intercedes for their Pardon, and, among other Motives, makes use of this; (n) *Oh, my God, this People have sinned a great Sin, and have made them Gods of Gold; yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their Sins; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the Book, which thou hast written*: (o) Not that God stands in need of a Book, wherein to register or record any of his Purposes; * but the Scripture makes use of this Form of Expression, in Allusion to the Custom of numbering the People, and setting down their Names in a Scroll, or Register, (p) as *Moses* did, at their coming out of the Land of *Egypt*. The same Method was likewise observ'd at the Return from the *Babylonish* Captivity, as may be seen in the Books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*; and those, who were inroll'd in this Book, are said, (q) *to be written for Life, or among the Living*, because,

From Exod. xiii. to Chap. xxxiv. 24.

And concerning himself, justifi'd.

(l) *Patrick's Commentary*, on Exod. xxxiii.

(m) *Universal Hist. Lib. i. c. 7.*

(n) Exod. xxxii. 32.

(o) *Patrick's Commentary* in Locum.

* To this Purpose the Royal *Psalmist*, in Relation to his own Formation in the Womb, bespeaks God, and says, *Thine Eyes did see my Substance, yet being imperfect, and in thy Book were all my Members written*; as if God kept a Catalogue of the Children that were born, *Psalm. cxxxix. 16.* And again, speaking of wicked Men, he says, *let them be wiped out of the Book of the Living, and not be written among the Righteous*, *Psalm. lxxix. 28.* Nor is this Form of Speech to be found only among *sacred Writers*, but even *Plautus* himself, having occasion in one of his *Prologues*, to take some Notice of the divine Providence, makes use of these Words.

Qui falsas Lites falsis Testimoniis
Petunt, quique in Jure abjurant pecuniam,
Eorum referimus nomina exscripta ad Jovem.
Quotidie ille scit, quis hic querit malum,
Qui hic litem apisci postulent Injuriam
Mali, Reu falsas qui impetrant apud Judicem
Bonos in aliis Tabulis exscriptos habet.

Le Clerc's Comment. ad Exod. c. xxxii.

(p) *Numb. i.*

(q) *Isaiah iv. 3.*

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because, every Year, they blotted out of this *Catalogue* the Names of those that were dead.

ACCORDING to this Construction of the Phrase, (and this is certainly the true Construction) *Moses* can by no Means be suppos'd to wish his own Damnation, which wou'd look like an *enthusiastick* Rant, rather than divine Inspiration; which wou'd be impious for him to ask, and unrighteous for God to do; but only that, "rather than live to see the Calamities, which wou'd befall the People, in Case God shou'd either desert or destroy them, he desires to be discharg'd from Life, that so he may escape the Shock of so woe'ful, so terrible a Spectacle."

IN a former Communion with God, wherein he threatens either to extirpate or disinherit his People, he promises *Moses* to (r) *make of him a greater Nation, and mightier than they*; but instead of that, *Moses* here desires to die with them; and, as a learned Father of the Church observes, " (s) there is a great deal of pious Art and Policy in the Petition, or Proposal (as we may call it) which this great Favourite and Confident of God offers to him. He does not make it at all Adventures, as one less acquainted with the divine Mind might do; nor does he make it out of a Slight and Contempt of Life, as one whose Circumstances had brought him into Despair might do. He knew God's Goodness was infinite, as well as his Justice; so that, in this Alternative, *either be thou pleased to slay me and them together, or to spare them and me together*, he was sensible he shou'd engage God's Mercy to pardon the *Criminals*, whilst, on their Behalf, he devoted himself at the same Time to that Justice, which can-

"not be suppos'd capable of hurting the Innocent."

ONE great Commendation, which we have frequently remark'd of the Author of the *Pentateuch* above any other Historian, is, that he consults *Truth*, more than *Plausibility* in his Narrations; and conceals no material Point, even though it tends to the Dishonour of the People, whose Actions he is recording. *Josephus* wrote the *Jewish History* of these Times, as well as *Moses*; and yet, when he comes to the proper Period, he quite conceals their blind Idolatry in Worshipping the *golden Calf*: Whereas *Moses* relates it in all its aggravating Circumstances, and seems to fix, in a Manner, the whole Odium of it upon his Brother *Aaron*. And therefore to inform ourselves how far *Aaron* was culpable in this Particular, we must attend a little to the probable Occasion of it.

WHILE *Moses* was gone up into the Mount, he appointed *Aaron* and *Hur* to be the Rulers of the People in his Absence; but, as his Absence prov'd longer than was expected, the People began to be uneasy. They saw the *Glory of the Lord*, which was like a devouring Fire on the Top of the Mount, and thereupon they concluded that *Moses*, who tarry'd so long, was certainly destroy'd in the Flames. They saw too, that the *Pillar of the Cloud*, which us'd to conduct them in their Marches, was gone, and in no Likelihood of returning again; and hereupon, having lost their *Guide*, and the visible Token of God's Presence among them, they came unto *Aaron*, and, in a tumultuous Manner, demanded of him to make them another Representation of the Divine Presence, in the Room of what was departed from them. (t) *Up, say they, and make us Gods (or as the Hebrew Text will bear †) make us a God which shall go before us.* (u)

From Exod. xiii. to Chap. xxxiv. 24.

How Aaron was induc'd to make the People an Idol.

Not

(r) Numb. xiv. 12.

(s) Paulin. Epist. xxi.

(t) Exod. xxxii. 1.

† It has been argu'd by some learned Men, that the *Israelites* intended here to fall entirely into the *Egyptian Religion*, and that the Deity, they made the *Calf* to, was some God of the *Egyptians*; but to me, this seems not to be the Fact. In this *Calf*, the *Israelites* evidently design'd to worship the God, who brought them out of the Land of *Egypt*, and accordingly their Fall was proclaim'd not to any *Egyptian* Deity, but to the Lord, to *Jehovah*, their own God, Exod. xxxii. 4. So that their Idolatry consisted not in really worshipping a false Deity, but in making an Image to the true and living God, which the Second Commandment expressly did forbid. *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. III. Lib. II.

(u) *Saurin's Dissertations*.

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Not that they were so stupid, as to imagine, that the true God cou'd be made by any Man, or that any Image cou'd be a Means of conducting them, either forward into *Canaan*, or back again into *Egypt*; but what they wanted, was some outward Object to supply the Want of the *Cloud*, by being a Type and Symbol of the Deity, and where they might depose the Homage, which they intended to pay to the supreme God; for so some of the *Jewish* Doctors have expounded the Text of *Moses*: (x) *They desired a sensible Object of divine Worship to be set before them, not with an Intention to deny God, who brought them out of Egypt, but that Something, in the Place of God, might stand before them, when they declared his wonderful Works.*

THE Commandment against making Images had so lately, in so terrible a Manner, been enjoin'd by God himself, that though some Reason may be given why the Children of *Israel* were so forward to make the Demand, yet none can be imagin'd, why *Aaron* shou'd comply with it, without making any Remonstrance, and yet we meet with no Refusal recorded by *Moses*. All that we have in Extenuation of *Aaron's* Fault, is from the Suggestion of the *Rabbins*, who pretend that his Compliance proceeded from his Fear; that the People had † murder'd *Hur* the other Deputy, for opposing their Desire; that, to discourage them from pursuing their Design, *Aaron* demanded all their *golden Ear-rings*, in Hopes that they wou'd not insist upon having an Idol, which wou'd cost them so dear; but that, when Nothing wou'd avail, he took their Gold, and cast it into the Fire, and, contrary to his Intention, by some *magical* or *diabolical* Art,

there immediately came out a *Calf*, which much increas'd the People's Superstition. But this, and Abundance more of the like Nature, seem to be Conceits, invented for the Excuse of *Aaron*, who is plainly enough said to have (y) *made this molten Calf*, which he cou'd not have done, without designing it, and running the Gold into a Mould of that Figure.

THE Word, which we here render *Calf*, (z) does, in other Places of Scripture, signify an *Ox*: And, as an *Ox's* Head was, in some Countries, an Emblem of Strength, and the Horns a common Sign of kingly Power; so (a) a learned *Prelate*, out of a Desire to apologize for *Aaron*, is willing to insinuate, that his Design, in making an *Ox* the Symbol of the divine Presence, was to remind the *Israelites* of the Power of God, and to express the great Tokens, which they had seen of it, in their wonderful Deliverance. But how ingenious soever this *Hypothesis* may be, it wants this Foundation for its Support, that this *Hieroglyphic* of the divine Power was not in Use in the Time of *Moses*; for if it was, we cannot imagine, why *Aaron*, when call'd to an Account by his Brother, shou'd forget to plead it in Excuse for himself; or why God shou'd be so highly incens'd against him, had his Design been only to exhibit a Symbol of the divine Power and Authority to a People of too gross Sentiments, without such a visible Representation, ever to comprehend it.

ANOTHER learned *Prelate* of our own, (b) equally inclin'd to excuse this Action of *Aaron*, supposes that he took his Pattern from Part of what he saw on the holy Mount, when the *Shechinah* of God came down upon it, attended with Angels,

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some

(x) *R. Jebudab*, in *Lib. Cozri*, Part I. Sect. 97.

† What Authority they had for these Assertions, I cannot say; but if what they offer be true, this does not at all prove *Aaron* to be innocent; because no Obstinacy of the People cou'd have forc'd him without his own Fault, and he shou'd have been willing, and adventur'd to die, rather than, by a timorous Compliance, have made himself Partaker of their Sins.

*Iustum & tenacem propositi virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis Tyranni
Mente quatit solidâ, &c.*

Hor. Car. lib. III. Od. iii.

(y) *Exod.* xxxii. 35.
of Idolatry, c. 6.

(z) *Psal.* cvi. 20.

(a) *Patrick* in his Comment. in *Locum*.

(b) *Tennison*

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some of which were *Cherubims*, or Angels appearing in the Form of Oxen : But this Opinion is inconsistent with the great Care, which was taken on Mount *Sinai*, not to furnish any Pretext for Idolatry, and the Caution which *Moses* gives the People to that Purpose. (c) *Take ye therefore good Heed to yourselves (for ye saw no Manner of Similitude, on the Day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the Midst of the Fire) lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven Image, the Similitude of any Figure, the Likeness of any Male or Female, the Likeness of any Beast that is on the Earth; the Likeness of any winged Fowl, that flieth in the Air; the Likeness of any Thing that creepeth on the Ground; the Likeness of any Fish, &c.* where the Holy Spirit enumerates Animals of all Kinds, and positively assures us, that none of their Forms or Figures appear'd upon the Mount.

THE most common therefore, and indeed the most probable Opinion is, that *Aaron* made Choice of the Figure of an Ox, or Calf, in Compliance to the Prejudice of the People, and because that Creature was worshipp'd in *Egypt*. That the *Israelites* were sorely infected with the Idolatry of the *Egyptians*, we have many plain Proofs (d) from Scripture to convince us; that all Sorts of Animals were worshipp'd by the *Egyptians*, and, among the *Terrestrial*, more especially the Ox, is what (e) the several Authors, who have treated of the Affairs of *Egypt*, do abundantly testify; and that the Idolatry of Animals, and more especially of the Ox, was establish'd in *Egypt*, during the Sojourn- ing of the *Israelites* in that Land, is more than probable from these Words of *Moses* to *Pharaoh*; (f) *if we sacrifice the Abomination of the Egyptians before their Eyes, i. e. if we sacrifice to our God Oxen, Sheep, and Goats, which the Egyptians worship and adore, and consequently make an Abomination to the Lord, will they not stone*

us? So that it seems most rational to suppose, that this Image was made in Compliance to the giddy Humour of the People, who, upon the suppos'd Death of *Moses*, were probably all for returning back again, and, in Imitation of the *Egyptians*, who worshipp'd their Idol *Apis*, or *Serapis*, not only in a living Ox, but in an Image made after the Similitude of an Ox, bethought themselves of the like Representation of a Deity to go before them: The only Question is, whether the Worship of the *Egyptian Apis* was prior to the Formation of this golden Calf, which happens to be a Point, wherein (g) the Learned are not so well agreed.

THUS we have endeavour'd to give a full Answer to several Objections, which have been rais'd against the sacred Historian during the Period, which is at present under Consideration: And, for a farther Confirmation hereof, we might now produce some foreign Testimonies and Traditions concerning the Truth and Veracity of his Narrations. That the miraculous Pillar, for Instance, which conducted the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, very probably gave Rise to the antient Fables, (h) how *Hercules* and *Bacchus* (who, under different Shapes, are both suppos'd to denote *Moses*) set up Pillars, in Testimony of their Travels and Expeditions: That the *Israelites* safe Passage over the Red-Sea, upon its being divided by the Rod of *Moses*, and the Tradition, which the People of *Memphis* have thereupon, are related by *Antapanus*, as he is quoted (i) by *Eusebius*: That, upon the Return and Conflux of the Waters, the Armies, which pursu'd them, were swallow'd up in the Deep, is mention'd (k) by *Diodorus*, as a current Story among the People inhabiting the western Coast of the Red-Sea: That, on this Coast there are several Lakes and Springs of a salt and brackish Taste, in the Manner that *Moses* has recorded, and no such

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All this con-
firm'd by Hea-
then Testimony.

(c) Deut. iv. 15, &c. (d) Vid. Josh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 7, 8. and Chap. xxii. 3, 8. (e) Vid. Strabo, lib. 17. de *Aegyptiacis* Templis. Herod. lib. 2. Diod. lib. 1. & Plutar. de *Iside* & *Osiride*. (f) Exod. viii. 26. (g) Vid. Ger. Fof. de Idolat. c. 9. Bochart. Hieros. Part I. lib. 2. and Tennison of Idolatry. (h) Huetius, Quest. Alnet. lib. 2. (i) Præpar. Evang. lib. 9. (k) lib. 3. p. 174.

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such Thing found on the other Side of the Sea, is testify'd (l) by *Orosius*, as well as several antient Geographers: That God's sending down *Manna*, for Bread, to the *Israelites*, and great Plenty of *Quails*, for Meat, is mention'd by *Antipanus*, as he is cited again (m) by *Eusebius*: That, from *Moses's* striking the Rock with his Rod, the Fable of *Bacchus's* doing the same with his *Tyrfus*, in order to extract Water for the Relief of the Virgin *Aura*, had its Original: And (to name no more) that,

from *Moses's* receiving the Law on Mount *Sinai*, most of the Lawgivers of other Nations took the Hint to borrow their Institutions from some God, or Goddess, or other; *Minos*, from *Jupiter*; *Lycurgus*, from *Apollo*; *Zekeucus*, from *Minerva*; *Numa*, from *Egeria*; &c. so well was the World persuaded of the Truth and Authority of the *Jewish* Legislator, when they seem'd to agree in this: — That even a distant Imitation of him was enough to give Sanction to their several Fictions.

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xxxiv. 24.

DISSERTATION I.

Of the ISRAELITES passing the Red-Sea.

Why this Miracle has been disputed.

THE Passage of the *Israelites* thro' the *Red-Sea* is what we have reserv'd for the Subject of our *Dissertation*, because it is one of the most remarkable Events in this *Period*, if not in the whole *Jewish* History; and yet has had the Misfortune to meet with more Suggestions against its *Miraculousness*, than any other, that we find upon Record.

WHAT has contributed to this *Perverseness* may not unlikely be the fond Conceits, which some antient Doctors, both of the *Jewish* and *Christian* Church, have been pleas'd to affix to this Miracle: *viz.* That God divided the Sea into *twelve* Passages, according to the *twelve Tribes*: That, to facilitate their Passage, he pull'd up the Weeds, remov'd huge Stones, levell'd the rugged Places, and made the Sand, at the Bottom, as hard as a Rock: That the Waters, upon being divided, were immediately congeal'd, and stood in *Array*, like a Wall of *Glass*; and that some Fragments of the *Egyptian Chariot-Wheels* may, even to this Day, be seen at the Bottom, as far as the Sight can reach. For it is not improbable, that, in Prejudice to these extravagant *Fancies*, others have exercis'd all their Wit and Learning to depreciate the Miracle, by

asserting, — That there was no more in it (even as *Josephus* himself seems to insinuate) than in *Alexander's* passing the Sea of *Pamphylia*; (n) that the *Red-Sea*, especially in the extreme Part of it, where the *Israelites* pass'd, is not above two or three Miles over, and very often dry, by Reason of the great Reflux of the Tide; and that *Moses*, who perfectly understood the Country, and had made his Observations upon the *Flux* and *Reflux* of the Sea, led down his Men at the Time of *Ebb*, when, being favour'd by a strong Wind blowing from the Shore, he had the good Luck to get safe to the other Side; while *Pharaoh*, and his Army, hoping to do the same, but mistaken in their Computation, had the Misfortune to be lost. And therefore, to give this Matter a fair Hearing, we shall first endeavour to establish the Truth of the *Miracle*, and then examine into the Pretensions of those, who are willing, either to ascribe it to *natural Causes*, or to compare it with other Events (as they suppose) of the like Nature.

WITHOUT entering far into *Moses's* *The Reality of* Character, we will suppose him, at present, it. a Man of common Sense, and who had some Honour and Modesty in him; and yet,

(l) *Huetius*, Quæst. Alnet. Lib. 2.
tation, concerning the Passage of the *Red-Sea*.

(m) *Præp. Evang. Lib. 9. c. 27.*

(n) *Vid. Le Clerc's Dissert.*

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yet, if he had, we can hardly conceive how he durst have recorded so palpable an Untruth, (supposing this Passage to have nothing *miraculous* in it) when there was such a Multitude of living Witnesses to confront him; or (o) what possible Artifice he cou'd use to persuade above two Millions of Persons, that God, by his Hand, had wrought a stupendous Miracle, when they knew, as well as he, that there was no such Thing transacted. Among such a contumacious and mutinous Set of People, *Moses* must necessarily have made himself *ridiculous*, and his Authority *despicable*, had he ever once attempted to foist such a Fable upon them. And therefore, when we find other sacred Writers bearing Testimony to what he relates, and relating the Matter in the like lofty Expressions; when we find the *Royal Psalmist* assuring us, that (p) *God, dividing the Sea, made the Waters to stand up on an Heap, and caused the Israelites to pass through*; when we find the Prophet *Isaiab* demanding, (q) *where is he, that brought them up out of the Sea, that led them by the Right-hand of Moses, by his glorious Arm dividing the Water before him, to make him an everlasting Name?* when we find the Prophet *Habakkuk* declaring upon this Occasion, that (r) *the Lord made himself a Road to drive his Chariot and Horses cross the Sea, a-cross the Mud of the great Waters*; and when we find the Author of the *Book of Wisdom* thus recording the Story; (s) *where Water stood before, dry Land appeared; out of the Red-Sea a Way without Impediment, and out of the violent Stream a green Field, where-through all the People went, that were defended by thy Hand, seeing thy marvellous strange Wonders; for they went at large like Horses, and leaped like Lambs, praising thee, O Lord, who hadst delivered them*: When we find these, I say, and several more Writers of great Authority, asserting the Wonderfulness of this Passage, (unless we can suppose that they were

all combin'd to impose upon us) we cannot but assent to the Truth of the Fact itself, how *poetical* soever we may think the Words of that sacred *Hymn* to be, wherein *Moses* endeavours to display it: (t) *By the Blast of thy Nostrils the Waters were gathered together, the Flood stood upright, as an Heap, and the Depths were congealed in the Heart of the Earth.*

IN an Event, so wonderful, and so unaccountable to human Reason, it cannot be expected, but that *Traditions* shou'd differ, and Accounts be various: But certainly it is no small Confirmation of the Testimony, which the sacred Writers give us of it, that we find *Antapanus*, in his History of the *Jews*, as he is quoted by (u) *Eusebius*, and (x) *Clemens of Alexandria*, giving us this Narration of the Matter.

“ The People of *Memphis* tell us, that
“ *Moses*, who was acquainted with all the
“ Country, knowing the Time, when the
“ Tide wou'd be out, carry'd over all his
“ Army at low Water: But those of
“ *Heliopolis* say otherwise, viz. that the
“ King, following the *Jews*, going away
“ with what they had borrow'd of the
“ *Egyptians*, carry'd with him a great
“ Army; but that *Moses*, by an Order from
“ Heaven, struck the Sea with a *Rod*,
“ whereupon the Waters immediately sepa-
“ rated, and he led over his Forces in a dry
“ Tract, but that the *Egyptians*, attempt-
“ ing the same Passage, were dazzled by
“ Lightning, and, as the Sea return'd
“ upon the Paths they were in, were all
“ destroy'd, either by Fire or Water.”

So that if the joint Testimony both of *Friends* or *Foes* can have any Weight with us, we cannot but believe, that this Passage of the *Israelites*, as it is recorded by *Moses*, was certainly Matter of Fact, and a Fact so very wonderful and miraculous, that Nothing in History can stand in Competition with it.

THE Passage of *Alexander the Great* over the Sea of *Pamphilia*, bears no Man-

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Alexander's
Passage con-
sider'd.
ner

(o) *Calmet's* Dissert. sur le Passag. de la Mer Rouge.
(p) *Hab.* iii. 15. (q) *Wisd.* xix. 7, &c.
c. 17. (x) *Strom.* Lib. 1.

(r) *Psal.* lxxviii. 13.

(q) *Isa.* lxiii. 11, 12.

(t) *Exod.* xv. 8.

(u) *Prepar. Evang.* Lib. 9.

A. M. 2513, &c.
Ant. Christ. 1491, &c.

ner of Resemblance to this of the *Israelites*. *Alexander*, as (y) *Arrian* * and others relate to it, was to march from *Phaselis* a Sea-Port, to *Perga* an Inland City of *Pamphylia*. The Country near *Phaselis*, upon the Shore of the *Pamphylian* Sea, was mountainous and rocky; so that he cou'd not find a Passage for his Army, without either taking a great Compass round the Mountains, or attempting to go over the *Strand*, between the Rocks and the Sea. The Historian remarks, that there is no passing along this Place, unless when the Wind blows from the *North*; and therefore *Alexander*, when he came to *Phaselis*, perceiving that the Wind blew from this Quarter, laid hold of the Opportunity; and, having sent some of his Army over the Mountains, went himself with the rest along the Shore. But now what Miracle was there in all this, unless we call the Wind's blowing *opportunely* for *Alexander's* Purpose a Miracle? It is certain, that, according to (z) *Plutarch's* Account of the Thing, *Alexander* himself thought that there was nothing extraordinary in it; and therefore we may justly wonder * at *Josephus's* comparing this Passage

with that of the *Israelites*, when there is so manifest a Disparity between them. The *Israelites* cross'd over a Sea, where no Historian makes mention of any Persons, but they, that ever found a Passage; whereas *Alexander* only march'd upon the Shore of the Sea of *Pamphylia*, where the several Historians, who most magnify the divine Providence in protecting him, do all freely allow, that any one may, at any Time, go, when the Tide retreats, and the same Wind blows, that favour'd him.

WHAT the Breadth of the *Red-Sea* may be, at the Place where the *Israelites* pass'd over, is not so easy a Matter to determine, * because both *Geographers* and Travellers mightily differ in their Computations. But, if (according to some of the lowest Accounts) we suppose it to be much about two Leagues, most Writers agree, that the Sea, in this Place, is very boisterous and tempestuous, which is hardly consistent with a Shallowness, much less a total *Desertion* of Water, upon any hasty *Reflux*. The Wind, it must be own'd, if it blew from a right Quarter, might both forward the *Ebb*, and retard the *Flux*; but the Wind, which blew at this

From Exod. xiii. to Chap. xxxiv. 24.

That the Israelites Passage was not at Low-Water.

(y) Exped. Alex. Lib. i. and *Shuckford's* Connection. Vol. II. Lib. ix.

* *Strabo* relates the Matter thus. ——— “ About *Phaselis* there are Streights towards the Sea, through which *Alexander* pass'd his Army. There is also a Mountain, call'd *Climax*, which lies to the *Pamphylian* Sea, leaving a streight Passage to the Shore, which is quite bare in good Weather; but, when the Waves arise, it is, for the most part, cover'd with them. Now the Road by the Mountain is about, and difficult; and therefore, in calm Weather, they go by the Shore. But *Alexander* coming thither in stormy Weather, and trusting to his Fortune, wou'd go over before the Waves were abated, which made his Soldiers go all Day up to the Navel in Water, Lib. 14.” And much to the same Purpose is the Account, which *Plutarch* gives us. “ The March through *Pamphylia*, says he, has been the Subject to many Historians of mighty Wonder, and fine Declamation, as if the Sea, by Order of the Gods, gave Place to *Alexander*, which almost always is rough there, and does very rarely open a smooth Passage under those broken Rocks. But *Alexander* himself, in his *Epistles*, speaks of no Miracle, but only says, that he pass'd by *Climax*, as he came from *Phaselis*.” Vita Alex. Now, by the joint Authority of these two excellent Historians, this Passage is no more than an ordinary Thing, but the *Mosnick Transit* must still remain a Miracle, until we find as good *Historians* to vouch for a Passage over the *Red-Sea*. *Nicholls's* Conference, Part II.

(z) In Alexand. p. 674.

* The Words of *Josephus* are these. ——— “ I have been more particular in these Relations, because I find them in Holy Writ; and let no Man think this Story incredible of the Sea's dividing to save the *Hebrews*, for we find it in ancient Records, that This hath been seen before, whether by God's extraordinary Will, or by the Course of Nature, it is indifferent. The same Thing happen'd one Time to the *Macedonians*, under the Command of *Alexander*, when, for Want of another Passage, the *Pamphylian* Sea divided to make them Way, God's Providence making Use of *Alexander*, at that Time, as his Instrument for destroying the *Persian* Empire.” Lib. ii. c. 16. But it is evident, that *Josephus* was ignorant of the Account of the above-cited Historians, otherwise he wou'd have said nothing of the *Pamphylian* Sea's dividing for the Passage of the *Macedonian* Army, when the Matter of Fact was no such Thing.

* One affirms that the Sea is six Leagues wide, at this Place; another makes it but 15 Furlongs; one says it is narrow, and long like a River, and another allows it to be the Breadth of one League. *Thevenot* makes it eight or nine Miles in Breadth, but *Andricomius* will have it to be no more than six. Those however, who are minded to consult the Authors, who treat of this Subject among many others, may turn to *Diodorus Siculus*, Lib. iii. *Strabo*, Lib. ii. *P. Botton's* Observat. Lib. ii. *Petro della Valle*, Tom. I. Ep. 11. Voyage de Levant, and Theatrum Terræ Sacre.

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this Time, we are told, was an *East-Wind*, whereas it must have been a *West*, or *North-west* Wind, to have driven the Water, from the Land's-End, into the main Body of the Sea, as any one, who looks into a Map, may easily perceive. But now the *East Wind* blows cross the Sea, and the Effect of it must be, to drive the Waters partly up to the Extremity of the Bay, and partly down to the Ocean, which probably is the Meaning (if we must allow an *Hyperbole* in the Expression) of the Waters *being a Wall to the Israelites on their Right-hand, and on their Left*, because they so defended them on both Sides, that the *Egyptians* cou'd no Way come at them, but by pursuing them in the same Path, which they took.

W H Y they ventur'd to pursue the *Israelites*, the sacred *Historian* seems plainly to intimate, when he tells us, (a) that *the Angel of the Lord, which went before the Camp, removed, and went behind them: It came between the Camp of the Egyptians, and the Camp of Israel, and was a Cloud and Darknes to the one, but gave Light by Night to the other*: So that the true Reason, why the *Egyptians* went in after the *Israelites* into the Midst of the Sea, was, that they knew not where they were. They imagin'd, perhaps, that they were still upon the Land, or at least upon the Shore, whence the Sea had retir'd; the Darknes of the Night, and the *preternatural* Darknes of the Cloud, not suffering them to see the Mountains of Water on each Side. But (b) *when the Lord looked on the Host of the Egyptians through the Pillar of Fire*, i. e. when he turn'd the bright Side of the Cloud upon them, to let them see the Danger they were in, and, at the same Time (as *Josephus* adds) pour'd out a Storm of Thunder, and Lightning, and Hail-stones upon them from the Cloud; (c) *let us flee, cry'd they, from the Face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them*.

I T is not to be question'd, but that *Moses* was a Person of excellent Judgment:

By his being so long a *General* of an Army, he cou'd not but know the proper Advantages, that might be made in Marches and Retreats; and yet he seems to give no great *Specimen* of his Skill, by declining the Mountains, which possibly were inaccessible to the Chariots and Horsemen, and marching his Men along the Sea Coasts, where *Pharaoh's* Army might make after him, (as we find they did) had not God commanded him to take this Rout, and foretold him the Event. Upon the Approach of the *Egyptian* Army, *Moses* has sufficiently describ'd the Consternation, which the *Israelites* were in; and, can any one suppose, that such a Situation of Things was Matter of their own Choice, or that their Leader wou'd, of his own Head, have brought them into a Place, where there was no Possibility of escaping the Fury of their Enemies, without crossing the Sea? (d) Had *Pharaoh* laid hold of this Advantage, (and Nothing but a miraculous Interposition cou'd have hinder'd him) how cou'd *Moses*, with all his *sweet Words*, and Address, have prevail'd with his People to run into the Sea? Or, (supposing he trusted to the Tide at *Ebb*) how cou'd he know for Certainty, that this *Ebb* wou'd begin precisely at the *Close* of the Day, and that the *Egyptians* wou'd allow him Time to decamp, without their Guards giving Intelligence, or their Forces pursuing them in his Retreat; which had they done, to what dismal Extremities must he and his People have been reduc'd? If we suppose that this was an hasty Resolution, which the Difficulties, he found himself in, compell'd him to take; yet we shall still be at a Loss to know, how he cou'd possibly answer for the Event, or with what Face he cou'd promise the People, that (e) *the Lord would fight for them; that they should stand still, and see the Salvation, which he would shew them; and that the Egyptians, who had given them so much Molestation, they should see them again no more for ever?*

From Exod.
xiii. to Chap.
xxxiv. 24.

I I E

(a) Exod. xiv. 19, 20.
de la Mer Rouge.

(b) Ver. 19.
(c) Exod. xiv. 13, 14.

(d) Ver. 25.

(e) *Calmer's* Dissert. sur le Passage

A. M.
2513, *Ec.*
Ant. Christ.
1491, *Ec.*

HE might not be ignorant perhaps of the Course of the Tide, and might easily discern the favourable Disposition of the Wind: But was there never a Man in all the great Army, which *Pharaoh* brought with him, of equal Observation and Skill? It is incongruous to think, that the *Egyptians*, who excell'd, at that Time, all other Nations, in their Knowledge and Observation of *celestial* Bodies, shou'd be ignorant of the *Fluxes* and *Refluxes* of the Sea, in their *own* Country, in their *own* Coast, and in their *own* most trading and frequented Ports and Havens: And, if they were not ignorant of the Time of the Reflux, it is hardly to be imagin'd, that any Eagerness of Pursuit wou'd have made them venture into the *Gulf*, when they cou'd not but be sensible, that, in Case they *miscomputed*, the returning Waves wou'd devour, and swallow them up.

BUT the Truth is, their taking the Tide *at the Ebb* wou'd serve the Purposes, neither of the *Israelites* escaping, nor the *Egyptians* pursuing them. That it badly answer'd the Design of the *Egyptians* is plain from the Event; and that the *Israelites* cou'd promise themselves no Security by it, is evident from the Nature of its Motion. (*f*) Every one knows, that, in the *Flux* of the Sea, its Waters come on *gradually*, and, for the Space of six Hours, swell higher and higher upon the Banks; and then, continuing in this State for about a Quarter of an Hour, they sink by Degrees for six Hours more, and retreating from the Shores (which is call'd the *Reflux*) they remain at their lowest Ebb, as long as they had done at their highest *Flux*, and then begin to change their Course, and creep in towards the Shore again; and in this Revolution they always go on, with the Variation only of three Quarters of an Hour, and some Minutes, in each Tide.

THAT the *Red-Sea* does ebb and flow, like other Seas, that have Communica-

tion with the *Main Ocean*, we readily grant; but then we are told by those, who have made the exactest Observations, that the greatest Distance, that it falls from the Place of High-Water, is not above three hundred Yards, and that these three hundred Yards, which the Sea leaves uncover'd at the Time of *Low-Water*, cannot continue so above half an Hour at most, because, during the first six Hours, the Sea does only retire by Degrees, and, in less than half an Hour, it begins to flow again towards the Shore: So that, upon a moderate Computation, the most, that can be allow'd, both of Time and Space of passable Ground, is but about two hundred Yards, during six Hours, and an hundred and fifty, during eight. But now it is plain, that a Multitude of above two Millions of Men, Women, and Children, encumber'd with great Quantities of Cattle and Household-stuff, cou'd never be able to cross, even though we suppose it to be that *Arm* or Point of the Sea, which is not far distant from the Port of *Suez*, and allow them withal a double Portion of Time, and a double Space of Ground to perform it in; whereas the general Tradition is, that the Place where the *Israelites* enter'd the *Red-Sea* on the *Egyptian* Side, is two or three Leagues below this northern Point, at a Place call'd *Kolsun*; and the Place, where they came out of it, on the *Arabian* Side, is, at present, call'd (*g*) *Corondal*, where the Sea is about eight or nine Miles in Breadth.

FROM the Breadth of the Sea, and the *Israelites* coming out of it at a Place (*h*) of the same Name, with that of their Entrance, some have imagin'd, that they did not cross from Shore to Shore, but only took a short Compass along the *Strand*, that was left dry at Low-Water, and so came out a little farther in the *Bay*, which the *Egyptians* attempting to do, by the unexpected Return of the Tide, were all lost. Now, besides the Incongruity (as we said before) of supposing the *Israelites* better

From Exod.
xiii. to Chap.
xxxiv. 24.

Did not coast
along the
Strand, but
pass'd quite
through.

(*f*) *Calmet's* Dissert. ibid.
Numb. xxxiii. 6, 8.

(*g*) *Thevenot's* Voyage de Levant.

(*h*) Compare Exod. xiii. 20. with

A. M.
2513, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1491, &c.

better Judges of the Tide, than the *Egyptians* were, we do not find, that the Scriptures any where determine the Length of Time, which the former employ'd in passing this Sea. In the *Morning-Watch* (which continu'd from *two* to *six* in the Morning) it is said indeed, that (i) *the Lord troubled the Host of the Egyptians, and took off their Chariot-Wheels*; but how long the *Israelites* might have enter'd the Channel, before the *Egyptians* met with this Obstruction, is no where said; so that the Computation of Time will depend upon the suppos'd Breadth of the Sea.

SUPPOSING then (as we said before) that the Breadth of the Sea was about eight Miles in all, we cannot but imagine, that a People, *full of Strength and Vigour*, (as (k) the *Psalmist* represents them) pursu'd by so dreadful and enrag'd an Enemy, wou'd make the best of their Way; nor can we see any Absurdity in an Event, so abounding with Miracles, to suppose one more. (l) Now, if God interpos'd his Power to disable the Chariots of *Pharaoh*, lest the Return of the Waters shou'd excite the *Egyptians* Fears, and their Fears, by improving their Diligence, save them from Destruction; why might not God interpose the same Power (if there was Occasion) to quicken and accelerate the *Israelites*, and make them perform their Passage in due Time? Nay, if we will allow his own Words to be a good Comment upon his Actions, we cannot but suppose, that he did so, when we find him, after all was over, recounting his Kindness to them thus: — (m) *Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I did bear you on Eagle's Wings*, (where the Expression certainly denotes some extraordinary Assistance given them in their Passage) *and brought you unto myself*. It cannot be deny'd indeed, but that some Ambiguity may arise as to the Place, where the *Israelites* came on Shore, (since they were at *Etham* but two Days before, and now

landed in a Wilderness of the same Name) yet, if we will but suppose that there were two *Ethams*, the one a *Town*, where they encamp'd, on the *Egyptian* Side, and the other, on the *Arabian* Side, a *Wilderness*; or, if we will needs have the Wilderness of *Etham* denominated from the Town, supposing that the Town was situated near the Upper Part of the *Red-Sea*, and gave Denomination to a great *Desart*, which surrounded the *Head* of the *Bay*, and reach'd down a considerable Space, on both Sides of it, we may easily perceive, that though the *Israelites*, in the *Evening*, march'd from the Wilderness of *Etham* cross the Gulf, yet, upon their Landing in the *Morning*, they wou'd but be in another Part of the Wilderness of *Etham* still. Upon the whole therefore it appears, that the *Israelites* coasting it along the *Egyptian* Shore, in a Kind of *Semicircle*, is both a needless and groundless Supposition. For had this been *all*, upon the Return of the Tide, the drown'd *Egyptians* must have been brought back upon their own Shore; whereas the Scripture Account of this Matter is, — that, as soon as (n) *Moses stretched out his Hand over the Sea, it returned to its Strength, and the Waters returned, and covered the Egyptians, who fled against them*; which certainly can denote no less, than that the Mountains of Waters were first *dissolv'd*, where they were first *congeal'd*, i. e. on the *Egyptian* Side; and that *there* beginning to re-unite, in order to stop the *Egyptians* Return, they came rushing upon them in *vast Inundations*, and, of Course, sweep'd them away to the contrary, i. e. *Arabian* Shore, where all the Host of *Israel* were safely arriv'd.

THUS we have endeavour'd to evince the Reality of this miraculous Event, and to examine the Pretences of those, who have either compar'd it with others recorded in profane Story, or ascrib'd it to natural Causes, or espied some seeming Contradictions

From Exod.
xiii. to Chap.
xxxiv. 24.

(i) Exod. xiv. 24, 25.
(n) Exod. xiv. 27, 28.

(k) Psal. cv. 37.

(l) Saurin's Dissert.

(m) Exod. xix. 4.

A. M.
2513, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1491, &c.

Contradictions in it; and have nothing now more to do, but, with the grateful Psalmist, to acknowledge, upon this Occasion, (o) *Thy Way, O Lord, is in the*

Sea, and thy Paths in the great Waters, and thy Foot-steps are not known: Thou art a God, that doth Wonders, and hast declared thy Power among the People.

From Exod.
xiii. to Chap.
xxxiv. 24.

(o) Psal. lxxvii. 19, 14.



CHAP. II.

From the Building of the TABERNACLE, to the Death of K O R A H, &c.

The HISTORY.

A. M.
2514, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1490, &c.

Moses, on the Mount receives Directions concerning the Tabernacle, &c.

FOR full forty Days and forty Nights Moses continu'd upon Mount Sinai, as he had done before, without either Eating or Drinking; and when he came down from thence, his Face had contracted such a Lustre, by his holding so long a Conference with God, that the People were not able to approach him; and therefore, whenever he talk'd with Aaron, or any of them, he was accusom'd to put a Veil over his Face, as long as the Lustre lasted, but never made Use of any, when he went into the Tabernacle to receive the divine Commands.

WHILE he was on the Mount, God gave him the *Ten Commandments* written in two *Tables*, and withal full Instructions, in what Manner the *Tabernacle*, intended for his own Habitation among them, and all its sacred *Utenfils*, were to be made;

which he now communicated to the People, and, at the same Time, exhorted them to bring in their several Offerings to that Purpose. This they did in such Abundance, that he thought it convenient, by a publick Proclamation, to restrain their farther Liberality; and, having thus made a sufficient Collection of all Kinds of Materials, he gave them to Bezaleel and Aboliab, the two great Artists in Building, and all Manner of Workmanship, whom God had before made Choice of.

IN less than six Months, the Tabernacle, and all its rich Furniture were finish'd; and, on the first Day of the first Month, in the second Year after the *Israelites* Departure out of *Egypt*, it was set up: When, as soon as this was done, the *Pillar of the Cloud* († which is call'd the *Glory of the Lord*) cover'd, and quite fill'd it, so that

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

† The *Glory of the Lord* (what the *Jews* call *SCHERIKAH*) was a particular Manifestation of the Divine Presence, appearing usually in the Shape of a *Cloud*, but sometimes breaking out into a bright and refulgent Fire. For we must not suppose that the *Cloud*, and the *Glory of God*, were two different Things, but one and the same, even as the *Pillar of the Cloud* and *Fire* were; for outwardly it was a *Cloud*, and inwardly a *Fire*. And, in like Manner here, the external Part of it cover'd the *Tabernacle* without, while the inward Part of it shone in full Glory within the *House*; in which Sense the Account of this Appearance (Exod. xvi. 10.) is to be understood: The *Glory of the Lord* abode upon Mount Sinai, and the *Cloud* covered it (i. e. cover'd the *Glory of the Lord*, not the *Mount*) six Days; for, on the seventh Day this Glory broke through the *Cloud*, and appear'd like a devouring Fire in the Sight of all the People, Exod. xxiv. 17. This wonderful Appearance, whether occasion'd by the Presence of *Angels*, or (as others imagine) by the Residence of the second Person in the ever blessed *Trinity*, took Possession of the *Tabernacle*, on the Day of its Consecration, and (as the *Jews* believe) pass'd into the *Sanctuary* of *Solomon's Temple*, on the Day of its Dedication, where it continu'd to the Destruction of *Jerusalem* and the *Temple* by the *Chaldeans*; after which Time it was never more seen. *Culmet's Dictionary*, under the Word *Schekinah*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

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1490, &c.

that *Moses*, for some Time, was not able to enter in. However, when he enter'd in, he receiv'd Instructions from God, which he communicated to the People, in what Manner (according to this new *Institution*) he was to be worshipp'd by *Sacrifices* and *Oblations*; what *Festivals* were to be observ'd, and how celebrated; what *Meats* were forbidden; what the Instances of *Uncleannefs* were; and what the Degrees of *Consanguinity* prohibited in Marriage. And having appointed these, and some other Ordinances, he solemnly consecrated *Aaron* to the *High-Priest's* Office; his Sons, and, in them, their Posterity, he made Priests; and to these he adjoin'd the whole Tribe of *Levi*, to serve in the Tabernacle, with particular Allowances for their Subsistence, and some restraining Laws, as to their Persons, their Conduct, and Marriages.

Consecrates
Aaron and his
Sons.

EIGHT Days after his Consecration, *Aaron* offer'd his first *Burnt-Sacrifice* for himself and the People, which God was pleas'd to manifest his Acceptance of, in the Sight of all the People, by sending down Fire from Heaven, which, by consuming the Offering, struck them with such Reverence, that they all fell prostrate in humble Adoration before the Divine Majesty. The Fire, thus miraculously kindled, was, (a) by the divine Command, to be ‡ kept perpetually burning,

and no other to be us'd in all the Oblations that were made to God. But *Nadab* and *Abihu*, two unhappy Sons of *Aaron*, unmindful of this Command, took common Fire on their Censers, and so, entering the Tabernacle, began to offer Incense; but, by this their profane Approach, they so offended God, that he immediately struck them dead with Lightning; and, to inject Terror to the rest, order'd them to be carry'd forthwith out of the Camp, and there bury'd without any Mourning, or funeral Pomp. And, much about the same Time, he gave another Instance of his Severity against Sin, in a certain Person, the Son of an *Israelitish* Woman indeed, but whose Father was an *Egyptian*, who, for his *curfing* and *blaspheming* the Name of God, was by him directly order'd to be ston'd to Death; from which it became a standing Law, († though there was no express Precept to that Purpose before) that whoever was guilty of the like Offence, whether *Stranger* or *Israelite*, was to undergo the same Punishment.

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

Whereof two
are kill'd
with Light-
ning, and some
other Offenders
punish'd.

NAY, and not long after this, another Instance of the divine Severity, was upon a Man, who by a *post-fact-Law*, was likewise adjudg'd to be ston'd to Death, for violating the *Sabbath* (which God had so strictly injoin'd to be observ'd) by gathering some Sticks on that Day. There was

(a) Lev. vi. 12, 13.

‡ If it be asked, how this Fire cou'd be preserv'd, when both the *Tabernacle*, and the *Altar* whereon it burnt, were in Motion? (as they evidently were, when the *Israelites* journey'd in the Wilderness) I see no Reason, why we may not suppose, that, upon these Occasions, there might be a certain *portable Conservatory* of this *sacred Fire*, distinct from the *Altar*: And that there was some such Vessel made Use of, seems manifest from the Injunction, that, at such Times, the *Albes* should be removed from off the *Altar*, and a purple Cloth spread over it, Numb. iv. 8. *Bibliotheca Bibl.* Vol. IV. Occasion. Annot. 2.

† The Criminal, and his Offence, are only thus recorded by *Moses*: ——— The Son of an *Israelitish* Woman whose Father was an *Egyptian*, and a Man of *Israel*, strove together in the Camp, and the *Israelitish* Woman's Son blasphemed the Name of the Lord, and curf'd, Lev. xxiv. 11: But the *Jews*, in explaining these Words, have follow'd either that superstitious Respect, which they pay to the Name *JEHOVAH*, or their wonted Humour of supplying the Silence of the sacred History with Circumstances, no where to be found, but in their own Imaginations. In pursuance to their *Superstition*, they fancy, that the Crime of this *Blasphemer* consisted simply in his pronouncing the Name *JEHOVAH*, inasmuch as they suppose, that there can be no *Blasphemy* without such Pronunciation; and, in pursuance to their Humour of supplying the Silence of Scripture, they have invented a *Genealogy* for this *Blasphemer*. For they tell us, that he was the Son of one of those *Task-masters*, who were set over the *Israelites* in *Egypt*, and of that very *Task-master*, who, by personating her Husband, violated the Chastity of the *Jewish* Matron *Shelometh*, and was afterwards slain by *Moses*, for using the same Husband with great Barbarity; that the Son, who is here mention'd, quarrelling with a Man of the Tribe of *Dan*, because he wou'd not let him encamp in the same District, brought his Cause before *Moses*; but that, being condemn'd at his *Tribunal*, he began, out of mere Rage and Madness, to *blaspheme*. Of all this however *Moses* himself says nothing, out of a Scruple (as we may well suppose) to relate the Circumstances of a Crime, which his very Thoughts detested. *Saurin's Dissertations* 58.

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was no Penalty annex'd to the Violation of this Commandment ; and therefore the People, who brought him before *Moses*, were order'd to keep him in Custody, until he shou'd know the divine Pleasure concerning *Sabbath-breakers* ; and, when he acquainted them, that such Transgressors were to be punish'd with Death, (b) they immediately led him out of the Camp, and there ston'd, and bury'd him.

The Israelites
muster'd, and
their Manner
of encamping
and marching.

WHILE the *Israelites* lay encamp'd in the Wilderness of *Sinai*, God appointed *Moses* first, † to renew the Ordinance of the *Passover*, and then, with the Help of *Aaron*, and the *Heads* of each Tribe, to make a general Muster of the Men, that were able to bear Arms ; which accordingly was done, and the whole Number (exclusive of the Tribe of *Levi*, which were appointed to attend the Service of the *Tabernacle*) amounted to six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty Men ; and, upon this Muster, God appointed their Encampment, ever after, to be in this Manner.

THE whole Body of the People were dispos'd under four large *Battalions*, so plac'd, as to inclose the *Tabernacle*, and each under * one general *Standard*. The *Standard* of the Camp of *Judah* was first. It consisted of the Tribes of *Judah*, *Issachar*, and *Zebulun*, the Sons of *Leah*,

which pitch'd on the *East-side* of the *Tabernacle*, towards the Rising of the Sun. On the *South-side* was the *Standard* of the Camp of *Reuben*, under which were the Tribes of *Reuben*, and *Simeon*, the Sons of *Leah* likewise, and that of *Gad*, the Son of *Zilphab*, her Maid. On the *West-side* was the *Standard* of the Camp of *Ephraim*, under which were the Tribes of *Ephraim*, *Manasseh*, and *Benjamin*. And on the *North-side* was the *Standard* of the Camp of *Dan* and *Naphthali*, the Sons of *Bilhah*, *Rachel's* Maid, and that of *Asher*, the Son of *Zilphab*. Between these four great Camps and the *Tabernacle*, were pitch'd the four less Camps of the *Priests* and the *Levites*, who had their Attendance about it. On the *East-side* encamp'd *Moses* and *Aaron*, and *Aaron's* Sons, who had the Charge of the *Sanctuary*. On the *South-side* were the *Kohathites*, a Part of the *Levites*, descended from *Kobath*, the second Son of *Levi*. On the *West-side* were the *Gershonites*, another Part of the *Levites*, descended from *Gershon*, *Levi's* eldest Son ; and on the *North-Side* were the *Merarites*, the remaining Part of the *Levites*, who sprang from *Merari*, *Levi's* youngest Son.

THIS was the Order of the *Israelites* encamping ; and, in like Manner, the Method of their marching was thus —

When—

(b) Numb. xv. 31, &c.

† During the Sojourning of the Children of *Israel* in the Wilderness, they seem to have had a divine Dispensation from observing the Ordinances both of Circumcision and the *Passover*. *Circumcision* did not consist with their itinerant Course of Life, and for the Celebration of the *Passover* they had not, in every Encampment, all the Materials that were necessary : But, having now rested in the Confiner of the holy Mount for almost the Space of a whole Year, after the *Tabernacle* was set up, the High-Priest consecrated, and his first Oblation honour'd with a gracious Acceptance, God thought it not an improper Time to re-ordain the Celebration of the *Passover*, that so remarkable a Deliverance, as their Escape out of *Egypt* (which, by their repeated Desires of returning thither, seem'd, in a great Measure, to have been forgotten) might not altogether be obliterated. And if it shou'd be ask'd, whence they cou'd have a Sufficiency of Lambs and Kids for so vast a Multitude to feast on ; there is no Reason to deny (even supposing they had not a Supply of their own) but that they might traffick with the *Ismaelites*, and antient *Arabs* inhabiting these Parts, for such a Number of small Cattle, and being not far distant from *Midian* (Exod. iii. 1.) by the Interest of *Jethro*, might from thence be furnish'd with such a Quantity of Meal for unleaven'd Bread, as this one *Passover* (as this was the only one they kept in the Wilderness) may be presum'd to require. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and *Pool's* Annotations.

* All the twelve Tribes were distinguish'd from one another by particular *Standards*, and each *Standard* is suppos'd by some to have been of the Colour of that Stone in *Aaron's* *Pectoral*, upon which the Name of the Tribe, whereunto it belong'd, was written. The Figures on the *Standards* of the four principal Tribes, that we have mention'd, are these — In that of *Judah* was borne a *Lion* ; in that of *Ephraim*, an *Ox* ; in that of *Reuben*, the Head of a *Man* ; and in that of *Dan*, an *Eagle*, and a *Serpent* in his Talons ; which are indeed the four most perfect Animals, inasmuch as the *Lion* is the most noble among wild *Beasts* ; the *Ox* among *Beasts of Labour* ; the *Eagle* among *Birds* ; and the *Man* among all other Creatures. *Lamy's* Introduction, Lib. 1.

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

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Whenever they were to decamp, (which always was, when the *Pillar of the Cloud* was taken up from the Tabernacle) the Trumpet sounded, and, upon the first Alarm, the Standard of *Judah* being rais'd, the three Tribes which belong'd to it set forward; whereupon the Tabernacle was immediately taken down, and the *Gershonites* and *Merarites* attended the Waggon, with the Boards and Staves of it. When these were on their March, a second Alarm was sounded, upon which the Standard of *Reuben's* Camp advanc'd with the three Tribes under it; and after them follow'd the *Kohathites* bearing the *Sanctuary*, which, because it was more *holy*, and not so cumbersome as the Pillars and Boards of the Tabernacle, was not put into a Waggon, but carry'd upon their Shoulders. Next follow'd the Standard of *Ephraim's* Camp with the three Tribes belonging to it; and, last of all, the other three Tribes, under the Standard of *Dan*, brought up the Rear.

Moses appoints
70 Elders to
assist him in
the Govern-
ment.

AFTER that the *Israelites* had, for some Time, continu'd in Ease and Rest, not far from the Skirts of Mount *Sinai*, the *Pillar of the Cloud* gave them a Signal to decamp; but they had not march'd above three Days into the Wilderness, before they began to complain of the *Weariness* of their Journey, and to murmur against God; which so provok'd him,

that he † sent down *Fire*, and destroy'd the *Loiterers*, and such as were found in the extreme Parts of the Camp; so that, though upon *Moses's* Intercession, the Fire ceas'd, the Place nevertheless obtain'd the Name of *Taberah* which signifies *Burning*.

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

THIS fresh Instance of the People's *Stubbornness* made *Moses* apprehensive, that, though he had certainly eas'd himself, in some Measure, by constituting such Magistrates, as *Jethro*, his Father-in-law, had advis'd him to; yet the Work of governing so numerous, and so mutinous a People, wou'd still be an Over-match for him; and therefore, by God's immediate Direction, † he made choice of Seventy of the chief of the Elders of the People, Men of Renown for their Wisdom and Integrity, and every Way fit to be erected into a *supreme Court*.

TO these God imparted a Portion of the same Spirit, that he had given unto *Moses*, which enabled them to be highly assistant to him in the Government of a People, which, almost every Day, were discovering a Spirit of Discontent. For no sooner were they remov'd from *Taberah*, but they began to murmur at the *Manna* they had so long eat, and to regret the *Flesh-Pots of Egypt*, they had parted with; and hereupon they beset *Moses's* Tent on all Sides, and, in a tumultuous Manner, demanded

The People
murmur for
Want of Flesh.

† The Fire, which God sent upon the *Israelites*, came either immediately from Heaven, like Lightning, or did issue from the Pillar of the Cloud, which went before the Tabernacle; or, (according to the Conjecture of a learned Commentator) that, which is here call'd Fire, might be an hot, burning Wind, in these desert Places not unusual, and many Times very pestilential, and, on this Occasion, *preternaturally* rais'd in the Rear of the Army, to punish the *Stragglers*, and such, as out of a Pretence of Weariness, lagg'd behind. *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

† It may be suppos'd indeed, that *Moses* had no occasion for any more *assisting* Magistrates, after what had been constituted by the Advice of *Jethro*, his Father-in-law: But it is highly probable, that those of *Jethro's* advising were appointed to hear and judge only in smaller Causes, whereas all weighty and difficult Points, as well as last Appeals in smaller Matters, still were left upon *Moses*; and that it was to ease himself of this Burthen, that he made Choice of these *Seventy*, as Men of superior Capacity and Understanding, and who were to be assisted by the Spirit of God in their Judgments and Determinations. This Assembly of the *Seventy Elders*, not only the *Jews*, but even *Grotius*, and some other *Christians*, will needs have to be the same with that famous *Council*, which afterwards obtain'd the Name of *SANHEDRIM*. The *Rabbins* have left no Stone unturn'd to prove, that the *Sanhedrim* did constantly subsist ever since its first Institution by *Moses*, and that the Members of it always assembled themselves before the Tabernacle, where-ever that was set up, either in the Wilderness, or in the promis'd Land, till the erecting of the Temple by *Solomon*, who, at the same Time, built them a stately Room or Hall to convene in. They add farther, that this *supreme Court* was continu'd in *Babylon*, during their Captivity there, and that, at their Return, it had the same Place rebuilt in the *second Temple*, and so continu'd till its total Extinction under the *Romans*. But as they bring no Authority for these, and many other Particulars relating to this Assembly, but merely their own *Traditions*, they are justly reject'd by the major Part of *Christians*, who can find no Foot steps of any such high Court, either in the Times of *Joshua*, of the *Judges*, or of the *Kings*, nor indeed after the *Babylonish* Captivity, till the Time of the *Maccabees*. *Calmer's* Dissertations, sur la Police des anciens Hebreux, and Universal History, Lib. 1. c. 7.

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demand'd of him a Supply of Flesh, instead of *Manna*; which, how unreasonable soever it was for them to request, God nevertheless promis'd *Moses* to perform: And, accordingly, caus'd the *South-Wind* to arise, which drove vast Quantities of *Quails* from the Sea-Coasts to within a Mile of the Camp, where they lay, about a Yard thick, upon the Ground. But while they were regaling themselves with these Dainties, the Anger of the Lord fell upon them, and smote a great Number of them with a sore Disease, whereof they suddenly dy'd, in Memory of which the Place came to be call'd *Kibroth-Hattaavah*, i. e. the *Graves*, or *Sepulchres* of *Lust*, and *Concupiscence*.

And Aaron
and Miriam
against Moses.

FROM this Place the People took their Journey to *Hazereth*, where another unhappy Accident befel them. For *Aaron* and his Sister *Miriam*, observing what great Power their Brother *Moses* had with the People, and that God chiefly made use of him in the Delivery of his Oracles to them, began to envy him; but, to give some Colour to their Quarrel, they pretend to fall out with him upon Account of his marrying a Foreigner, whom they

call'd in Contempt an *Ethiopian*. This *Moses* cou'd not but perceive: But, as it was a personal *Pique*, he took no Notice of it. God however wou'd not suffer it to go off so; and therefore calling *Moses*, *Aaron*, and *Miriam* before the Door of the *Tabernacle*, he sharply rebuk'd the two latter. He gave them to understand the Disparity, † in Point of *divine Revelation*, between them and him, and (to leave a Brand upon their contumacious Affecting an *Equality*) he immediately smote *Miriam* † with a Leprosy; and though, upon *Moses's* Intercession, he promis'd to remove it, yet, because the Offence was *publick*, he order'd her to be turn'd out of the Camp for seven Days, in the Manner of any common Leper, that others might be deterr'd from the like *sedition* Practices. After several Encampments, the People came at length to † *Kadesh-Barnea*, on the Frontiers of *Canaan*, where *Moses* was commanded to chuse twelve fit Men, out of each Tribe one, (among whom were *Joshua* and *Caleb*) to take a View of the Country: And, accordingly, having receiv'd their Instructions from him, to examine diligently into

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

He sends Spies
into the Land
of Canaan.

† The *Jewish* Commentators make the Difference between *Moses*, and other Prophets, to consist in these Particulars. 1st, That God spake to others by a *Mediator*, i. e. (as they explain it) by some Angel; but to him by himself, without the Intervention of any other. 2dly, That they never prophesy'd, but their Senses were all bound up either in Visions, or in Dreams; whereas he was perfectly awake, as we are, when we discours'd one with another. 3dly, That after the Vision was over, they were oftentimes left so weak and feeble, that they cou'd scarce stand upon their Feet, (as appears from *Dan. viii. 18.*) whereas *Moses* spake with the divine Majesty without any Consternation, or Alteration. And 4thly, That no Prophet, but he, cou'd know the Mind of God, when he pleas'd, because he communicated himself to them only when he thought proper; whereas *Moses* might at any Time have Recourse to God to enquire of him, and receive an Answer. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† A *Leprosy*, as well as all other Distempers (such as the *Scurvy*, *Ring-worms*, *Itch*, &c.) which bear Resemblance to it, does proceed originally from a previous ill Disposition both in the Blood and Juices, but the more immediate Cause of it is an Infinity of *small imperceptible Worms*, that insinuate themselves between the Flesh and Skin, which first prey upon the *Scarf-Skin*, then upon the *Inner Skin*, and afterwards upon the Extremities of the *Nerves* and *Muscles*, from whence arises a total Corruption of the whole Mass of Blood, and all the other Symptoms attending it. But the Leprosy here inflict'd upon *Miriam* was sudden and instantaneous. The Juices of her Body were not corrupted by a gradual Decay, but turn'd at once into these corroding *Animals*. And, as this was a fit Punishment for her Pride and Detraction, so, by its being inflict'd on her, and not on *Aaron*, it seems not improbable, that she was *first* in the Transgression, and drew *Aaron* (who seems, in some Instances, to be a Person of too much *Facility*) over to her Party. *Aaron* indeed, by his Office, was appointed to judge of Leprosy, which he cou'd not have done, had himself been infected with it; and as he was lately consecrated his High-Priest, God, for the Preservation of his Authority, might not think it proper to make him so soon become vile and contemptible in the Eyes of the People, as this Distemper was known to make Men. *Calmet's Dissertation, sur la Nature, &c. de la Lepre*, and *Patrick's Commentary.*

† Most Commentators and Geographers are of Opinion, that whatever is said of *Kadesh*, in the Travels of the *Israelites*, is to be understood of one and the same Place; whereas the sacred History plainly makes mention of two Places of the same Name; one, adjoining to the Wilderness of *Paran*, which is mention'd, *Numb. xiii. 26.* and the other lying in the Wilderness of *Sin*, mention'd in *Numb. xx. 1.* and *xxxiii. 36.* *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. II.

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into the Strength of its Cities and Inhabitants, the Nature and Fertility of its Soil, and the like, they set out upon their Progress, and finish'd it in forty Days.

AT their Return they pass'd through a Valley, which, for its Fertility in Vines, is call'd the Valley of *Eshcol*, which signifies a *Cluster of Grapes*; and here they cut down a Branch, with but one Cluster upon it, which, * by Reason of its immoderate Largeness, as well as to preserve the Grapes from being bruise'd, they hung upon a Pole, and carry'd between two Men's Shoulders. Nor was this the only Product of that happy Soil; the golden Fig, and beautiful Pomegranate adorn'd the Trees, and a Variety of other Fruits (of which they brought *Samples* along with them) loaded the luxuriant Branches.

BEING at length happily arriv'd in the Camp, they went, and made their Report to *Moses* and *Aaron*, in the Presence of the Elders, and of all the People. They began indeed with extolling the Riches of the Land, and shew'd them a *Specimen* of some of the Fruits, which it produc'd; but when they perceiv'd that this Account had fir'd the People with a Desire to become the happy Possessors of it by a speedy Conquest, *ten* of them then began to alter their *Tone*, and to represent it as a Thing impossible, both by Reason of the Strength of its fortify'd Towns, and the Valour, and *gigantick* Stature of its Inhabitants.

JOSHUA and *Caleb* were the only

two, that remain'd true to their Report, and gave them all imaginable Encouragement, that the Enterprize was practicable; but the cowardly Account of the other ten had got such a powerful Possession of them, that they cry'd out, one and all, that they cou'd never hope to overcome such powerful Nations, in Comparison of which they look'd upon themselves as mere *Grasshoppers*, and *Reptiles*; and their Murmuring, in short, grew to such an Height by the next Morning, † that a Return to *Egypt* was thought more adviseable, than to face such an Enemy. Nay, in the Hearing of *Moses* and *Aaron*, of *Caleb* and *Joshua*, (who endeavour'd to dissuade them all they cou'd, even to the Hazard of being stone'd by them) they were deliberating upon a proper Person to re-conduct them into the Land of their former *Thralldom*; when, all on a sudden, the *Glory of God* appear'd in a brighter Lustre than ordinary, in the Tabernacle, and from thence was heard to speak to *Moses* in such *threatning* Terms, as gave the People Cause to fear, that some speedy and terrible Judgment wou'd be the Reward of their Rebellion and Ingratitude.

HERE *Moses* was forc'd again (as at several other Times) to become their *Intercessor*, and made use of such powerful Arguments, and Expostulations, as did, in some Measure, avert the divine Vengeance: But, as their Ingratitude and Infidelity were become intolerable, notwithstanding God's constant Care in providing against their Wants, screening them from their

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

Upon their Report, the People are for returning to Egypt, and the false Spies are slain.

* That there are Vines and Grapes of a prodigious Bigness in those *eastern* and *southern* Parts of the World, is a Matter recorded by several Writers. *Strabo* tells, that in *Margiana*, and other neighbouring Countries, there were Vines so very thick about, that two Men cou'd scarce fathom them, and that they produc'd Bunches of Grapes of two Cubits long. *Pliny* informs us, that in the *Inland* Parts of *Africa* there are Bunches of Grapes bigger than young Children. *Olearius*, in his Travels into *Persia*, acquaints us, that, not far from *Astracan*, he saw Vines, which a Man cou'd hardly grasp with both his Arms; and the learned *Huetius* affirms, that in *Crete*, *Chios*, and other Islands in the *Archipelago*, there are Bunches of Grapes, from ten, to forty Pounds in Weight. *Quæst. Alnet. Lib. 2.* and *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

† Though they might, in their raging Fits, speak of returning into *Egypt*; yet it is an amazing Thing, that they shou'd continue in their Madness, and deliberate about it, nay actually appoint them a *Leader*, as *Nehemiah*, ix. 17. says they did. For how cou'd they get thither without Food, which they cou'd not expect that God wou'd send from Heaven, when they had thus shamefully forsaken him? How cou'd they hope to find their Way, when the Cloud, which directed them, was withdrawn from them, or think of coping with such Nations, as wou'd oppose their Passage, in Case they shou'd hit upon the right Way? And, after all, if they came into *Egypt*, what Reception cou'd they expect from a People, whose King, and Princes, and *First-born* had lately been destroy'd upon their Accounts? Nothing can be said in Answer to these Questions, but that outrageous Discontent insatuates Mens Minds, and will not suffer them to consider any Thing, but that which grieves them. *Patrick's* Commentary.

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their Enemies, and preserving them from all Dangers; he solemnly declar'd, that none of that Generation, above twenty Years of Age, except * *Joshua* and *Caleb*, (who receiv'd his Commendations for their Fidelity) shou'd enter into the promis'd Land, but shou'd wander, from Place to Place, in the Wilderness, for the Space of † forty Years: And as for the false *Spies*, the immediate Authors of this Rebellion, they were all destroy'd by a sudden Death (c), and became the first Instances of the Punishment denounc'd against the whole Nation.

The Israelites
defeated.

THIS severe Punishment, join'd with the Sentence of *Exclusion* from the promis'd Land, gave the Humours of the People soon another Turn: For, supposing that their *Forwardness* now wou'd make some Atonement for their former *Cowardice*, they assembled themselves together next Morning, and offer'd to go upon the Conquest. *Moses* endeavour'd, what he cou'd, to dissuade them from so rash an Enterprize, by telling them, that it was contrary to God's express Command, and therefore cou'd not prosper; that, by their late

undutiful Behaviour, they had forfeited his Assistance and Protection, without which it was impossible for them to succeed; and that, as the *Amalekites* and *Canaanites* had gain'd the Passes of the Mountains before them, there was no fighting them upon the *Par*. But all this Admonition had no Weight with them: Notwithstanding the *Ark of the Covenant* went not with them, notwithstanding *Moses*, their General, was not at the Head of them; yet out they march'd to the Top of the Mountains, where the Enemy surpriz'd, defeated, and, having slain many of them, pursu'd the rest, as far as *Hormah*.

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xxxiv. 28. to
Numb xviii.

WHILE the People continu'd in the Wilderness, many remarkable Occurrences befel them, and Seditions, almost innumerable, were daily fermenting; but one in particular was hatch'd (with the utmost Deliberation) in the Breast of one of the Chiefs of the Tribe of *Levi*, and countenanc'd by some of the most considerable Men in the whole Camp.

The Rebellion
of Korah, &c.
and the De-
struction that
attended it.

† *KORAH*, the great Grandson of *Levi* by his Father *Jahar*, and, consequently, one of the Heads of that Tribe, impatient

* *Josephus* introduces *Joshua* and *Caleb*, (in order to pacify the tumultuous People) delivering themselves in Words to this Effect. "How is it possible for you, good People, to distrust the Veracity and Goodness of God, and, at the same Time, to give Credit to Stories and Amusements about the Land of *Canaan*, that are propagated on purpose to abuse you? Why shou'd not you rather believe and follow those, who have taken so much Pains to put you into the Possession and Enjoyment of the Blessings you desire? What's the Height of Mountains, or Depth of Rivers to Men of undaunted Spirits, and of honourable Resolutions; especially, when God is both their Protector and Defender? Wherefore let us advance, and attack the Enemy, without ever questioning the Event. Only trust God for your Guide, and follow us, where we shall lead you." *Jewish Antiquities*, Lib. 3. c. 14.

† *Moses* here makes use of a round Number, in Allusion to the forty Days of the Spies searching the Land; though it is plain, that the Children did enter into the Land of *Canaan* in less than thirty-nine Years, after this Sentence was pronounc'd against their Fathers. The Truth is, *Moses* reckons the Time past since they came first into the Wilderness, which was a Year and an Half; so that the Meaning of the Sentence is, — That they shou'd wander for forty Years in all, before they went out of the Wilderness, which however is not to be understood so precisely, as to want nothing at all of it: For since they came out of *Egypt* on the 15th Day of the first Month, and arriv'd in *Canaan*, and pitch'd their Tents in *Gilgal*, on the tenth Day of the first Month of the one and fortieth Year after their Departure out of *Egypt*, *Josh. iv. 19*; it is plain that there wanted five Days of full forty Years. *Universal History*, Lib. 1. c. 7. and *Patrick's Commentary*.

(c) Numb. xiv. 36, 37.

† At what Time, or in what Encampment, this Rebellion of *Korah* and his Adherents happen'd, the sacred History has not inform'd us; but, as the general Opinion is, that the Cause of the Mutiny was his Resentment upon the Advancement of *Aaron*, and his Family, to the Office of the High-Priest; so we find *Josephus* introducing him, as addressing himself to his Accomplices in Words to this Purpose: "A Scandal it is, and a Thing not to be endur'd, for *Moses* to take upon him at this Rate; to carry on his Ambition thus, under the Mask of Holiness and Religion, and by that Means to raise himself a Reputation to the Wrong of other Men. He gave lately the Priesthood, and other Dignities to his Brother *Aaron*, without any Right or Colour for it. No Consent of the People was ask'd, nor any Pretence of Authority produc'd, save only his own arbitrary Will and Pleasure: — For what has he to say for himself for so doing? If God has annex'd the Honour to the Tribe of *Levi*, I myself may pretend a Right to the Preference, being of the same Stock with *Moses*, and his Superior both in Riches and Years: Or, if it be to pass by Seniority, it belongs to the Tribe of *Reuben*, viz. to *Dathan*, *Abiram*, and *Phaleg*, who are the Seniors of that Tribe, and Men of eminent Credit every Way among them." *Jewish Antiq.* Lib. 4. c. 2.

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impatient to behold *Aaron*, and his Family rais'd to the highest Office in the *Priesthood*, to which he thought himself had an equal Title, was always caballing against him, until he had drawn a considerable Number of eminent Persons into his Interest, and, among these, *Dathan*, *Abiram*, and *Hur*, who were Heads of the House of *Reuben*. As soon as Things were ripe for an open Rupture, *Korah* appear'd at the Head of the Faction, and publicly upbraided *Moses* and *Aaron* with an unjust Ambition, in usurping upon the Liberties of the People, in ingrossing all Power into their own Hands, and excluding every Body else.

SURPRIZ'D at the Boldness of this Accusation, *Moses*, for Concern, fell prostrate upon his Face; but when he rose again, he desir'd that the Determination of their Controversy might be left to God, and, for that Purpose, appointed them to appear, on the Morrow, at the Door of the Tabernacle, with every Man his Censer in his Hand: And then addressing himself to *Korah*, and the rest of the *Levites*, he put them in mind of their Ingratitude and Arrogance, in not being content with the Dignity and Privileges, which God had annex'd to their Tribe, without aspiring at the *High-Priesthood*, which he had reserv'd to *Aaron*, and his Posterity.

DATHAN and *Abiram* were at some Distance, when *Moses* thus talk'd with the rest; and therefore, supposing that they had been drawn into the Conspiracy by *Korah's* Insinuations, he sent privately to them, with a Design to argue the Case more calmly with them: But, instead of a civil Answer, he receiv'd an haughty Message, wherein they upbraided him with a Non-performance of his Promise, and "that he had decoy'd the whole Nation, "from the rich and fertile Land of

Egypt, under the Pretence of bringing them into a much better, but, instead of that, had only detain'd them in a barren Wilderness, there to domineer and tyrannize over them." At which Message *Moses* was so highly provok'd, that he appeal'd to God against the Injustice of it, and, at the same Time, requested of him not to regard the Prayers and Offerings of such ungrateful Wretches.

EARLY next Morning *Moses* and *Aaron* went towards the Tabernacle, whither *Korah*, at the Head of his Party, with each Man a † Censer in his Hand, (attended with a vast promiscuous Multitude, which came, in all Probability, to be Spectators of this famous Contest) fail'd not to repair. The first Thing that drew their Eyes, was, the amazing Splendor, which issu'd from the Cloud over the Tabernacle, from which God call'd to *Moses* and *Aaron* to withdraw from that rebellious Crew, lest they shou'd be swallow'd up in the Destruction, which he was going to bring upon them. Hereupon *Moses*, having first requested of him not to slay the Innocent with the Guilty, advertis'd the People (if they consulted their own Safety) to separate themselves from the Company of these wicked Men; and then bespake the Assembly to this Purpose:

— "That, if these Rebels dy'd in the common Way of Nature, he wou'd give them leave to call in question his divine Mission; but that, if the Earth did immediately open itself in a miraculous Manner, and swallow them up alive, he then hop'd that they wou'd look upon him, only as an Instrument in God's Hand, and sufficiently authoris'd for all he did." And no sooner had he ended these Words, but the Earth clove asunder under their Feet, and swallow'd them up alive, together with their

Families,

† The two hundred and fifty Princes had not, as yet, offer'd any Incense, because they were prevented by Death; however it may be presum'd, that they had lighted their Censers at the *holy Fire*, by which they obtain'd (at least in the Opinion of the People) a Kind of *Consecration*: And therefore, to keep up among them a Reputation and Esteem for Things consecrated, as well as to shew the Difference between his own Institution, and Men's Contrivances, God order'd all these brazen Censers to be wrought into broad Plates, and to cover the Altar with them; that being polish'd bright they might, by their Lustre, put the People in Mind of the Offence of those, who were once Owners of them, and so caution others against the like Offence. *Houell's History of the Bible*, Lib. 2.

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Families, and all their Substance; while at the same Time, *Korah*, and his Company, (who stood with their Censers before the Court of the Tabernacle) were all destroy'd by a miraculous Fire from Heaven: And, to perpetuate the Memory of this Judgment, as well as to deter, for the future, any, but the Sons of *Aaron*, from presuming to burn Incense before the Lord, *Eliezar* was order'd to gather up the Censers of the Dead, and to have them beat into broad Plates for a Covering of the *Altar*.

Great Numbers slain by the Plague.

So terrible a Punishment, one wou'd think, might have been sufficient, for some Time at least, to have kept the *Israelites* within the Bounds of their Obedience; but, no sooner were they recover'd from their Fright, than they began to murmur afresh, and to accuse *Moses* and *Aaron* for having murth'rd the People of the Lord, as they were not asham'd to call that seditious Crew. *Moses* and *Aaron* were well aware of the unruly Temper of the People, and therefore, fearing to what Degree of Madness and Outrage they might proceed, they took Sanctuary in the Tabernacle; where they had no sooner enter'd, but God threaten'd to destroy all the rest of the Congregation, as it were, in a Moment, and had already sent out a Plague amongst them; which *Aaron*, at his Brother's Directions, endeavour'd to

assuage by his interposing, with a Censer of Incense, between the Dead and the Living; but the Plague, in this short Time, had rag'd so violently, that no less than fourteen thousand and seven hundred Persons (besides those, that perish'd in the Sedition of *Korah*, and his Company) were carry'd off by it.

From Exod. xxxiv. 28. to Numb. xviii.

THIS was enough, in all Reason, to establish the Authority, *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical*, in the Hands of the two Brothers: However, to put *Aaron's* Claim beyond all Manner of Dispute, God was pleas'd to confirm it by one Miracle more. *Aaron*, on the one Side, and the *Heads* of every Tribe, on the other, were order'd to bring each Man his Rod, with their respective Names written upon them, and these were to be deposited in the Tabernacle, until the next Morning; by which Time God wou'd decide in Favour of that Family, on whose Rod some miraculous Change shou'd be seen. Accordingly, when they came to examine them next Morning, † *Aaron's* Rod alone was found, not only to have budded, but blossom'd likewise, and brought forth ripe Almonds: In Memory of which remarkable Decision, God order'd the Rod to be laid || up in the *Ark of the Covenant*, and gave an express Prohibition, that none, but the Sons of *Aaron*, shou'd presume to come into the Tabernacle, under Pain of Death.

And Aaron's Priesthood confirm'd to him by a Miracle upon his Rod.

The

† Some will needs have this Rod of *Aaron's* to have been the same with that of *Moses's*, wherewith he wrought so many Miracles in *Egypt*, and at the *Red-Sea*; but there is this Argument against them, that the Miracle of its *Blossoming* had not been a sufficient Conviction to the *Israelites*; if so be that *Aaron's* Rod had not been of the same Kind with the rest. For, whatever had come to pass, they might have ascrib'd it to the singular Quality and Virtue of the Rod (especially had it been *Moses's* Wonder-working Rod) and not to the special Hand of God interposing to establish the Authority of *Aaron*; whereas, on the contrary, we find that the Miracle had its intended Effect, and silenc'd for ever the Pretences of other People to the Priesthood. It is presum'd therefore by some learned Men, that the Rods, which the several Princes brought *Moses*, were neither their common *Walking-staves*, nor any such Wands, as were a Badge of their Power and Authority in their respective Tribes, but rather certain *Twigs*, that were cut off from some *Almond-Tree*, and not improbably from one and the same Tree, that there might be no manner of Difference between them. The Difference, however, next Morning, appear'd in this: — That on the *Twig*, which bore *Aaron's* Name, there was, in some Places, an Appearance of Buds coming forth; in others, the Buds were open'd, and shot forth into Blossoms; and in others, the Blossoms were knotted, and grown into Almonds. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

|| It is made a Matter of some Enquiry, whether this Rod of *Aaron's* was put *within* the *Ark of the Covenant*, or only *by* it. God commanded *Moses* to put it only in the Tabernacle (*Numb. xvii. 4.*) to be preserv'd there; but *St Paul*, in *Heb. ix. 4.* says, that it was plac'd *within* the *Ark*, with a Pot of Manna, and the Tables of the Law. Others affirm, that it was not put *within*, but only *by the Side* of the *Ark*; and for their Opinion they alledge a Passage, in *1 Kings viii. 9.* which seems to intimate, that there was nothing in the *Ark*, but the Tables of the Law: But then their Adversaries contend, that *St Paul*, in that Passage to the *Hebrews*, is to be understood *literally*; that there cou'd be no Hindrance for its being put into the *Ark*, since the *Ark* was five Foot long, and cou'd not but be

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The OBJECTION.

“ *M*OSESES, no doubt, was a peculiar Favourite of God, and his Admission to an intimate Conversation with him, on the *sacred* Mount, was a Vouchsafement of an extraordinary Nature; but it seems a little irreconcilable to our Thoughts, how human Nature, in its present Situation, cou’d be able to subsist *forty Days and forty Nights* without any Manner of Sustenance; nor can we conceive, how the Countenance of *Moses* came to contract a bright and radiant Lustre, by conversing with the Deity, at this Time, more than it did, when he went up to the Mount before. The *Israelites*, without all Question, were a very obstinate and perverse Sort of People; but (to magnify himself) *Moses* seems to have represented them in blacker Colours, than they did deserve; because it is hardly to be imagin’d, how they cou’d, after having been *Eye-Witnesses* of so many Miracles wrought for their Preservation, go on still in distrusting, and complaining of God; nor can we devise any Reason, why they were not punish’d a Year before, as well as now, for *asking Flesh for their Lusts*, since, at both Times, their Crime was equally the same.

“ (d) *God’s Hand cannot wax short*, as himself told *Moses*, neither can his Power admit of any Diminution; and yet it seems to favour of some Defect in that Respect, and to be a Derogation from the Greatness of the Miracle, that we find *Quails* (which they had before)

“ sent here again, upon their second Complaint. Quails, no doubt, are excellent Food; but a *Diversity*, one wou’d think, had been more agreeable to the *Generality*, and more expressive of God’s Sovereignty over the World; because a *Repetition* of the same Diet to a People he was minded to gratify, seems as incongruous a Thing in him, as it wou’d be in a *Clerk of the Kitchen* to be always sending up the *same Bill of Fare*.

“ (e) *Whatever goeth in at the Mouth*, we must allow, *defileth not the Man*; and therefore we may justly wonder, why God shou’d exact (f) a Prohibition of several Kinds of Food, which have no Relation to inward *Purity*, and to many of which Mankind seem to have a natural Aversion, without a divine Interdiction: And tho’ the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews* has inform’d us, that several Things, relating to the *Tabernacle-Service*, were Types of *Christ*, yet we are still at a loss to know, why the great *Mysteries* of Man’s Redemption shou’d be *prenotify’d* by such dark *Shadows* and *Emblems*, and not rather discover’d in the plainest *Predictions*, and Expressions imaginable.

“ GRIEF for the untimely Death of a Child, is what a good-natur’d Parent cannot refrain, and therefore how much soever we may suppose, that the two young Men, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, deserv’d to suffer for their Indiscretion; yet it seems to be an unreasonable Restraint upon the innate Passions of human Nature, for God to forbid *Aaron*

“ to

of Capacity enough to hold it; and therefore, when the Scripture says, that there was nothing in the Ark but the Tables of the Law, they conceive that it may be understood with this Limitation. ——— That nothing else was originally in it, because the Ark was *primarily* intended for that Use; but this need not hinder but that, afterwards, other Things likewise might be put in it. How long this wonderful Rod continu’d in this *Repository*, is nowhere mention’d in Scripture. When the Ark was brought into *Solomon’s Temple*, 1 *Kings* viii. 9. there is no Notice taken of it; and yet it seems reasonable to think, that it shou’d have been preserv’d for some considerable Time, and preserv’d in that very *Verdure*, wherein it now appear’d, with its Buds, Blossoms, and Fruit, for the Conviction of Posterity. *Cabnet’s Dictionary*, under the Word *Rod*.

(d) Numb. xi. 23.

(e) Matth. xv. 17, 20.

(f) Lev. xi. 13.

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“ to make any Moan or Lamentation for
“ them. Nor can we think it any In-
“ stance of *Moses's* Prudence and Modesty,
“ to commend himself so highly *for being*
“ *very meek, above all the Men that were*
“ *upon the Face of the Earth*, or to relate
“ the Difference between him, and his
“ Brother and Sister, who seem to have
“ had sufficient Reason to quarrel with
“ him, for marrying another *Ethiopian*
“ Woman, and so disgracing their Fa-
“ mily, by a base and *idolatrous* Alli-
“ ance.

“ F I T however it was to bring the
“ Matter to a speedy Accommodation,
“ otherwise the Defection of *Korah* might
“ have prov'd more dangerous, and the
“ Juggle of *Aaron's* *fructifying* Rod
“ (which, according to the History, was
“ certainly under *Moses's* Management,
“ and who, by Slight of Hand, might ea-
“ sily have substituted an Almond Branch
“ in the room of it) cou'd not have been
“ carry'd on so dextrously. But to make
“ Almighty God interpose in a Family-
“ Quarrel, and condescend so far, as to
“ call the several Parties before him, is
“ certainly debasing the divine Majesty,
“ and giving it an Employ a little below
“ its Dignity.”

Answer'd, by
showing the
Reasons of
Moses's Fast-
ing.

IN this State of our Infirmary indeed,
we are oblig'd to repair the gradual De-
cays of our Bodies with a Supply of daily
Food; but in that of a greater Perfection,
there will be no Occasion for these weak
Supports of human Nature. In the mean
Time we are assur'd, that (g) *Man doth*
not live by Bread alone, but by every Word
that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God,
by whose Command our natural *Perspira-*
tion may be so shut up, and the Instru-
ments of our *Digestion* so retarded, as to
make a small Quantity of Meat subsist us
for a considerable Time. *Elijah*, we
read, had (h) but a *Cake baken on the*
Coals, and a *Cruse of Water* for his whole
Repast, even when he was going to un-
dertake a long Journey; and yet we find,

that, both under the Fatigue of Body,
and Expend of Spirits, which Travelling
must necessarily occasion, he was enabled
to go *in the Strength of that Meat forty*
Days and forty Nights. And for the like
Reasons we may suppose, that *Moses* being
now receiv'd within the Cloud on Mount
Sinai, might find no uneasy Cravings of
Appetite, during his Stay, and long Con-
versation with God.

THE *Jews* have a Proverb with Rela-
tion to this long Fasting of his, (i) which
tends to this Purpose, “ that *above*, where
“ there is neither Eating nor Drinking,
“ *Moses* stay'd eighty Days, (*viz.* at two
“ different Times) and became like the
“ Angels; and *below*, where Men do eat
“ and drink, *ministering* Angels come
“ down, and eat and drink, like them.”
Whereby they seem to impute this Al-
teration of Appetite in both to a Change
of *Climate*, rather than a *Miracle*. But
whether the Climate contributes to it or
no, it is certain, that God, by Influences
and Emanations from himself, can sup-
port a Man, as long as he thinks fit, and
keep up his Spirits in their just Height,
without the common Recruits of any Kind
of Aliment.

IT is another Notion of the *Jews*, (k)
that, as Eating and Drinking are Actions,
which prejudice the Understanding, God,
who intended to prepare his *Servant* for
the Reception of the Revelations he was
going to communicate, withheld all Meat
and Drink from him, that, by depressing
his *bodily* Faculties, he might exalt his
intellectual. In the Case of *Daniel*, it
is certain, that, in order to dispose him
for the heavenly Vision, (l) *he did eat no*
pleasant Bread, neither came Flesh or Wine
in his Mouth, for three whole Weeks toge-
ther, as himself testifies: And therefore,
considering the many wonderful Things,
which God intended to impart to *Moses*,
there seems to be a *Propriety* at least, if
not an absolute *Necessity*, of his being
put under the like *Regimen*, to enable
him,

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

(g) Matt. iv. 4.

(h) 1 Kings xix. 6, 8.

(l) Dan. x. 3.

(i) Vid. *Buxtorf*.

(k) *Patrick's* Commentary.

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him, with more Facility, to comprehend them.

St *PAUL* is suppos'd to speak of himself, (though Modesty makes him conceal it) when he expresses his Visions in these Words: — (m) *I knew a Man in Christ, above fourteen Years ago, (whether in the Body, I cannot tell, or out of the Body, I cannot tell, God knoweth) such an one caught up to the third Heaven; and I knew such a Man (whether in the Body, I cannot tell, God knoweth) how he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable Words, which it is not lawful, or (as the marginal Note has it) not possible for Man to utter.* Now, wherever the divine Presence is, there is *Paradise*, and there is *Heaven*: And therefore, if St. Paul, when he was in a Vision, and thought himself translated to the Regions above, in the Contemplation of the wonderful Things, he saw and heard there, lost all Sense of his Body, and Perception of its Affections; why may we not suppose, that the Joy and Extasy, where-with *Moses* was transported, upon the like Occasion, made him never think of once eating or drinking?

A MAN must be a Stranger to deep Study and Meditation, who has not experienc'd in himself a total Forgetfulness, for some Time, not only of the *nimble Minutes*, as they pass'd away, but of the *Necessities of Nature* likewise, as they came upon him; and even found, at length, that his Recollection, and Sensation of these Things, proceeded from an Imbecility of his Mind, which was not able to endure a continu'd Intention, or Stretch of Thought, more than any natural *Call*, which seems to have been suspended, as long as his superior Faculties were thus agreeably employ'd. With much more Reason therefore we may conclude, that, in the Presence of God, where the Mind might be impregnated with a Power to sustain the Fatigue of close, perpetual Thinking, the Variety of Objects, which presented them-

selves, wou'd be so great, and the Entertainment of its intellectual Faculties so very strong, as wou'd quite absorb all corporal Desires and Appetites.

HAD *Moses* therefore been employ'd in no farther Capacity, than barely in contemplating the many amazing Wonders of God's infinite Being, which the Irradiations from his *beatifick* Presence must have transfus'd upon his Mind; this had been enough to suspend all other Operations, and engross, as it were, the whole Complex of his Faculties. But besides this, the Scripture informs us, that (n) he took a Review of the *Model* of the Tabernacle, and its Furniture, which God had shewn him when he was with him before, and (as we may suppose) receiv'd *fresh* Instructions from God. This cou'd not but take up some Proportion of his Time; as most of the Remainder of it seems to have been spent in (o) Prayer and Intercession with God for the People, that he wou'd restore them entirely to his Favour, and bring them, in his good appointed Time, to their Inheritance.

UPON the whole therefore it appears, that, as *Moses* was in the Presence of God all the while that he continu'd on the Mount; had a full Employ for his Mind and Thoughts, during that Time; and, by the divine Influence, had his *Spirits* sustain'd in their proper Height, and his *animal* Part preserv'd without wasting; he cou'd have no Leisure to think of eating and drinking, or, that (had he thought thereon) he cou'd find in himself no *Call* or Occasion for it.

THE Word *Karan*, which our Translators have made *shining*, is by the *Vulgate* render'd *cornutus*, or *horned*; and, from this Misapplication of Ideas, *Painters* very probably have been induc'd to draw *Moses* with a Pair of Horns branching, as it were, out of his Forehead; whereas the proper Representation of him shou'd be, with a *Glory*, covering his Head, in the Manner that the Saints are painted in the

From Exod. xxxiv. 28. to Numb. xviii.

Why *Moses's* Face did not shine, at the first going up to the Mount.

(m) 2 Cor. xii. 2, &c.
Chapter.

(n) From the Beginning of the xxvth Chap. of *Exodus* to the End of the xxxth
(o) Deut. ix. 18, 19, 25, 26. and x. 10.

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Roman Church : For it is not improbable, that the Hair of his Head was interspers'd with Rays of Light, at the same Time that a certain beauteous Lustre proceeded from his Face, and dazzled the Eyes of its Beholders.

Moses was certainly in this, as well as many other Things, an eminent *Type* of our Saviour *Christ*, and the *Change* of his Countenance an *Emblem* of our Lord's *Transfiguration* upon the Mount, when (p) his Face (as the *Evangelist* relates the Matter) did *shine as the Sun*, and his Raiment was *white as the Light*. In both Cases, it was the glorious *Being* (q) within the Cloud, that transfus'd this radiant Splendor around his Son and Servant : But the Reason, why *Moses*, at his first Time of being upon the Mount, and conversing with God, did not contract this wonderful Brightness, seems to be this ; — That he had not then seen the *Divine Majesty* in so great a Splendor, as he did now. He was oblig'd then to keep at a more awful Distance from the tremendous *Throne* of God, and not come within the *Circle* of its Refulgency ; but now, upon his humble Petition, God was pleas'd to vouchsafe him such a Sight of his *Glory*, as his human Nature cou'd bear. So that, by being permitted to come within the Circumference of it, he carry'd off (tho' unknown to himself) * such a *beamy Lustre* from the divine *Refulgency*, as (like the *lambent Fire*, wherewith the Poets

adorn the Temples of their *Herdes*) play'd about his Head and Face, and there was permanent for some considerable Time : For, *Moses* being now to bring down the *Tables of the Covenant* from the Mount, that the People might not suspect him of any Fallacy or Collusion, or think that his Pretence to a Correspondence with the *Deity* (as that of some subsequent Law-givers prov'd) was vain and fictitious, God was pleas'd to send along with him this *Testimony*, as it were, of his having held Communion with God. For the miraculous *Radiency*, wherewith he was adorn'd, shew'd in what Company he had been during his Absence ; confirm'd his Message to the People ; and, in every Respect, carry'd new *Credentials* in it.

It may seem a little strange indeed, why a People, so immediately under the Guidance of God, shou'd, every Day, stand in need of so many new *Credentials*, and, upon every little Emergency, fall a murmuring and rebelling against the God of *Israel*, and his Servant *Moses*. St *Stephen*, in quoting the Prophet *Amos*, has let us into the Cause of this People's frequent Prevarications : (r) O ye *House of Israel*, have ye offered to me slain Beasts and Sacrifices, by the Space of forty Years in the *Wilderness* ? Yea, ye took up the *Tabernacle of Moloch*, ‡ and the *Star of your God Remphan*, Figures which ye made, to worship them. By *Moloch* the Learned are pretty well agreed, that we are

From Exod. xxxiv. 28. to Numb. xviii.

Why the Israelites were so apt to murmur and mutiny.

(p) Matth. xvii. 2.

(q) Ver. 5.

* It was a Custom amongst the ancient *Heathens*, and probably deriv'd from what here besel *Moses*, to represent the Gods with a *beamy Glory* around their Heads, ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ ἀντίκας πορεύειν, to carry Rays about their Heads, as *Lucian de Dea Syria* has it : And hence it was, that the *Roman Emperors*, who were rais'd so much above the rest of Mankind, that they were honour'd as a Sort of *Deities*, were thus represented ; as appears from the Testimony of *Pliny*, (among many more) who, in his *Panegyrick* to *Trajan*, makes the *Radiatum Domitiani Caput* the Subject of some Banter. *Patrick's Commentary*.

(r) Acts vii. 42, 43.

‡ Thus the *Septuagint*, from whom St *Stephen* took this Passage in *Amos*, translate it ; but the Import of the *Hebrew* Text is this, Ye have borne the *Tabernacle of your Kings*, and the *Pedestal* (so the Word *Chinn* signifies) of your *Images*, the *Star of your Gods*, which ye made to yourselves. So that it seems very probable, that the *LXX* read *Rephan* or *Revan*, instead of *Chinn* or *Chewan*, and thereby mistook the *Pedestal* for a God. *Kircher* however, and *Salmasius* assert, that *Kion* is *Saturn* ; that his Star is call'd *Keiran* among the *Persians* and *Arabians*, and that *Remphan*, or *Rephan* signify'd the same Thing among the *Egyptians* ; and therefore they suppose, that the *Septuagint*, who made their Translation in *Egypt*, chang'd the Word *Chinn*, into that of *Remphan*, because they had the same Signification. *Remphan* is generally suppos'd to have been an *Egyptian* God ; and *Hammond*, in his Notes upon Acts vii. 43. is of Opinion, that this was the Name of a certain King of *Egypt*, who, after his Death, was deify'd by his Subjects : But of what Make and Figure the Image of this *Idol* was, or in what Manner he was worshipp'd, we can no where learn. *Calmer's Dictionary*, under the Words *Chinn* and *Remphan*.

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are to understand the Image of the *Sun*, and by *Remphan*, that of the Planet *Saturn*; and that the Worship of these Idols was a common Thing among the *Israelites*, in the Time of their Sojourning in the Wilderness, is manifest from that Passage of the *Prophet*, where he introduces God, thus complaining of the Perverseness of that People: (s) *In the Day, that I chose Israel, and lifted my Hand unto the Seed of the House of Jacob, to bring them forth out of the Land of Egypt, unto a Land that I had espied for them, flowing with Milk and Honey, then said I unto them, "Cast ye away every Man the Abominations of his Eyes, and defile not yourselves with the Idols of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me; they did not every Man cast away the Abominations of their Eyes, neither did they forsake the Idols of Egypt.* Nay, so far were they from forsaking the Idols of Egypt, that we find them adopting strange Gods from every other neighbouring Nation, which occasion'd that severe Commination in God: (t) *I will set my Face against that Man, and will cut him off from among his People, because he has given of his Seed unto † Moloch, to defile my Sanctuary, and to profane my holy Name.* And if any one fail to punish this Idolater, *then will I set my Face, says God, against that Man, and against his Family, and will cut him off, and all, that go a whoring after him, from among their People.*

Now if Idolatry was a Practice, which the *Israelites* retain'd, and, in some Instances, improv'd, after their Departure out of *Egypt*, there is great Reason to presume, that these *Idolaters* were the very *Murmurers* also, who infected the Camp with their *Infidelity*. They might believe (because they saw so many Manifestations of it) the Residence of a God amongst them; but then it is not unlikely, that they thought of him (as most of the *Heathens* thought of their Gods) that he was a local and limited Deity, who had done something for them indeed, but cou'd not do all they wanted; who had brought them into the *Wilderness*, but had not the Power to conduct them into *Canaan*.

IN this Manner it is, that the *Psalmist* represents them reasoning with themselves. (u) *Shall this God of ours prepare us a Table in the Wilderness? He smote the stony Rock indeed, that the Water gushed out, and the Streams flowed withal; but can he give Bread also, and provide Flesh for his People?* Many of these Miracles they saw wrought before their Eyes; but then they might look upon *Moses*, who did them, (x) to be no more than a meer *Magician*, though perhaps of a better Sort, than those of *Egypt*; and, consequently, might be apprehensive, that, upon every new Turn and Exigence, his Art wou'd fail him: And therefore, having no better Notions of God, and so gross a Conception of their *Leader*, it is no Manner of Wonder that they ran into *Murmuring* and *Discontent*, into *Riot* and *Disorder*,
upon

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

(s) Ezek. xx. 5, &c.

(t) Lev. xx. 3, &c.

† The *Rabbins* assure us, that the Idol *Moloch* (which was the same as *Baal*, the *Sun*, or Lord of Heaven, worshipp'd by all the People in the *East*) had its Image made of Brass, sitting upon a Throne of the same Metal, having the Head of a Calf, adorn'd with a royal Crown, and his Arms extended, as it were, to embrace any Thing: But what the Children's *passing through the Fire* means, they are not so well agreed. Some of them are of Opinion, that Parents, in the Worship of this Idol, did not actually burn their Children, but only caus'd them to leap through Fire that was lighted before it, or to pass between two Fires plac'd opposite to each other, by Way of Lustration; but the Expressions of *David* are a little too strong to admit of this Interpretation. For, when he tells us, that *they sacrificed their Sons and Daughters unto Devils, and that they shed innocent Blood, even the Blood of their Sons and Daughters, whom they sacrificed to the Idols of Canaan*, *Psal. cvi. 37, 38.* we cannot but infer, that they did actually murder their Children in this execrable Way. — When any Infants were to be sacrific'd, the Idol was made hot by kindling a great Fire in the Inside of it; and when it was heated to a most intense Degree, the miserable Victim was put into its Arms, and soon consum'd by the Violence of the Heat; but, that the Cries of the Children might not be heard in their Extremities, the People were wont to make a great Noise with Drums, and other Instruments, about the Idol. *Cabnet's Dictionary, and Dissertations.*

(u) *Psal. lxxviii. 20, 21.*

(x) *Bibliotheca Bibl. Vol. IV. Occas. Annot. 5.*

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2514, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1490, &c.

Why God sent
Quails among
them twice.

upon every little Difficulty, that press'd them.

TWO Times we find them complaining for the Want of such Food, as they desir'd; once (y) in the Wilderness of *Sin*, a few Days after their Passage of the *Red-Sea*, and again, at the Encampment (z) of *Kibroth-Hattaavah*, not long after their Departure from Mount *Sinai*; and, at both of these Times, God thought proper to send them *Quails*: Not out of any Destitution or Scarcity of other Provision, (for (a) *all the Beasts of the Forest are his, and so are the Cattle upon a thousand Hills; he knows all the Fowls upon the Mountains, and the wild Beasts of the Field are in his Sight*) but for this very Reason, — That how willing soever he might be to supply his People's Necessities, he had no Design to pamper their Appetites with a needless Variety, or to multiply Miracles without any just Occasion. And therefore, as both these Events happen'd in the *Spring*, when *Quails* (which are found in great Quantities upon the Coasts of the *Red-Sea*) are accusom'd to pass from *Asia* into *Europe*, God caus'd a Wind to arise, which, in their Flight, drove them towards the Camp of the *Israelites*, and (b) (as the *Eastern Tradition* has it) was so very violent, that it broke their Wings, and made them fall at a convenient Distance, and in a proper Condition to be taken up.

THAT *Quails*, among us, are very excellent Food, cannot be deny'd; but the same Tradition informs us, that these Birds, in *Arabia Felix*, do vastly surpass all others, and (as our Author expresses it) have *neither Bones, Veins, nor Sinews in them*, i. e. are very fat and tender, something like our *Fig-peckers*, and *Ortolans*. And therefore, tho' God refus'd to gratify their Palates with a profuse Variety of Dainties, yet is there no Fault to be found with his Provision, since the Food he sent them was delicious in its Kind, and a whole Year had now interven'd between

the former and latter Flight of *Quails*, to *whet* their Appetites, and prevent any Danger of being cloy'd with the same Dish.

SOMETHING however there was in their Behaviour, which provok'd God, in this their *latter*; more than their *former* Complaint for Want of Flesh, to punish them so severely. (c) The Desire of Flesh for Food is, in itself, but *natural*, and, absolutely speaking, far from being *criminal*, or provoking to the Author of Nature, who created every Appetite of Man, as well as his Understanding: But when this breaks out into *Murmuring*, *Mutiny*, and *Disorder*, the Case is then entirely alter'd. In the *former* of these Cases, the People were in Want of Bread, and really pinch'd with Hunger; but in the *latter*, they had *Bread from Heaven* in Abundance, and may therefore be said to complain not out of *Need*, but *Wantonness*. Their Discontent in the former Case was express'd comparatively, in modest Terms; but here their Tone is, (d) *Who shall give us Flesh to eat? We remember the Fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely, the Cucumbers, and the Melons, and the Leeks, and the Onions, and the Garlick; but now our Soul is dried away; there is nothing at all, besides this Manna, before our Eyes.* This same Contempt of the *Manna*, which God so miraculously sent from Heaven, especially in Persons so well instructed in the divine Will, was such an Instance of Baseness and Ingratitude, as justly deserv'd the Punishment it met with.

IN the former Time of their Complaining, God wink'd at their Ignorance, and pitied their Distress: He had not then given them his Laws for the Rule of their Actions and Appetites, and therefore, never looking to reap, where he had not sowed, he was not so extream as to mark what they had done amiss; but, after he had publish'd his Precepts from the *Holy-Mount*, and many more Instructions from the

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

Why he was
angry at their
second Mur-
muring, tho'
not at the first.

(y) Exod. xvi. 3, 13.
P. 749. Col. 1.

(z) Numb. xi. 34.

(c) *Bibliotheca Bibl.* Vol. IV. Occas. Annot. 3.

(a) Psal. l. 10, 11.

(b) Vid. *Bibl. Orient.*

(d) Numb. xi. 5, &c.

A. M.
2514, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1490, &c.

the *Tabernacle*, he then expected that their Obedience shou'd keep pace with their Knowledge, and was more provok'd at their Backslidings, than before, because they proceeded not from the Ignorance of their *Minds*, but the Perverseness of their *Wills*: For, this was the true and the just Cause of their (e) *Condemnation*, that, even when *Light* was come into the *World*, they loved *Darkness* rather than *Light*, because their *Deeds* were evil.

Why he prohibited the Use of certain Animals for Food.

IN the 11th Chapter of the Book of *Leviticus*, we have a Catalogue of the Beasts, Fishes, and Fowls, which God either permitted, or prohibited the *Israelites* to eat. From his first making Choice of them, God's Purpose was to distinguish them from other Nations, and more especially from the *Egyptians*, among whom they had long liv'd, had contracted their Manners, and were too tenacious of their Customs: And therefore, in Opposition to these, he enjoin'd them to eat such Creatures, as were worshipp'd in *Egypt*, which wou'd be an effectual Means to render the Pretences of these *Sham* Deities contemptible; as, on the contrary, he order'd them to abstain from those, that were held in the greatest Delicacy among them. And, because the *Egyptians* wou'd have nothing to do with such Animals, as had *Hoofs* and *Horns*; the *Jews* were allow'd to eat none, but what parted the *Hoof*, as well as chew'd the *Cud*.

It is to be observ'd farther, that, in the very *Make* and *Nature* of some Animals, there are certain *Qualities*, which prejudice Mankind against them, and seem, as it were, to defecrate their Use; that some, for Instance are monstrously big, others very ugly and deform'd; some come from heterogeneous Mixtures, others feed upon dead Bodies; and to others most Men have an inbred Antipathy; so that, in the Main, what the Law forbade the *Jews* in this Regard, was Nature's Aversion before: But then the Question is—Why the Things, which they were naturally

averse to, and wou'd have refrain'd without it, were made the Matter of a divine Interdiction?

From Exod. xxxiv. 28. to Numb. xviii.

Now, if we trace the History of these People, we shall find, that they had their Seasons of Affliction and Scarcity, as well as of Prosperity and Plenty. At the very Time, when these Prohibitions were given them, they were travelling, and were to continue travelling for many Years in a waste and barren *Desart*, which, being destitute of the Conveniences and Necessaries of Life, might tempt them to make Experiment upon the Flesh of some of those Animals, that they naturally abhorr'd, but, upon this Occasion, as they thought, might innocently make use of: And therefore, to set a stronger Guard upon human Nature, God thought proper to confirm this their innate Aversion, by the Sanction and Establishment of Laws, which were to last beyond the Term of their Continuance in the Wilderness.

THE Truth is, this People, by their gross Impieties, and Prevarications with God, brought frequently upon themselves Famines, and Sieges, and other Calamities, wherein they suffer'd very grievously. To pass by the Famines, which happen'd, (f) in *Judea*, (g) in the Time of the *Judges*, and (h) in *David's* Days; in the Reign of *Ahab*, there was (i) a dreadful one in *Samaria*, when an *Ass's Head* was sold for fourscore Pieces of Silver, and the fourth Part of a Cab of Doves-Dung (it shou'd be render'd Pulse) for five Pieces of Silver; and (what is more lamentable still) when Mothers enter'd into Compact about eating their own Children. But the most tragical Account of all is that, which their own Historian has recorded of them, at the Siege of *Jerusalem* by *Titus*, when Wives snatch'd the Necessaries of Life from their Husbands, Children from their Parents, and Parents from their Children; (k) when Mothers were forc'd, for their own Support, to defraud their *Infants* of the little *Milk*, that was in their Breasts, while

(e) John iii. 19.
xxi. 1.

(f) 2 Kings vi. 25.

(g) Bibliotheca Bibl. Vol. III. Occasional Annot. 3.

(h) Joseph. de Bello Jud. Lib. v. c. 10.

(i) Ruth i. 1.

(k) 2 Sam.

A. M. while the *Infants* were dying in their
2514, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1490, &c. Arms for want of it; when Hunger and
 Necessity turn'd every Thing into Victuals,
 and (what is shocking to human Nature
 but barely to think on) (l) made one
Jewish Lady of Quality eat her own
 Child.

Now the Use, that I wou'd make of
 this melancholy Part of their History, is
 this: — That, as to God's Prescience,
 were present from Everlasting all the
 Wickednesses, and Rebellions of this Peo-
 ple; so were those Penalties and Judg-
 ments, which his infinite Wisdom deter-
 min'd to be most suitable to them. For
 what Method can be thought more proper,
 to make an Impression upon those that
 forsake God, than that he shou'd forsake
 them, *i. e.* so far, at least, as to withdraw
 the Succours of Life from them? And,
 considering his Prohibition of certain Ani-
 mals for Food under this View, it was
 certainly a kind and generous Warning
 to his People, not to bring themselves,
 in Consequence of these Provocations,
 (which he foreknew, and against which
 he had so strictly caution'd them) into
 such Circumstances, as wou'd oblige them,
 either to forbear the very last Means of
 sustaining Life, or to break more of
 God's Commandments, than they had
 done before.

BUT there is a farther Reason, arising
 from the Quality of Animals, why God
 might enact a Discrimination of Meats,
 and that is — to give his People there-
 in a *mystical System of Morality*. Thus
 the Birds, which were allow'd to be
 eaten, (the Pigeon, the Dove, the Par-
 tridge, for Instance) were either tame,
 or of gentle Nature, feeding on Grain
 or Pulse; whereas all the *Species*, that
 liv'd on Prey, and such as gorge them-
 selves with Flesh and Blood, were utterly
 forbidden, thereby to bring into Repu-
 tation Justice, and Mercy, and Moderation,
 and, at the same Time, to discountenance

the contrary Disposition to Rapine,
 Oppression, and Cruelty. It is a noted
Allegory, That in *Homer*, of *Circe's* chang-
 ing *Ulysses's* Friends into Hogs. By *Circe*,
 the Poet intends that we shou'd understand
sensual Pleasures; by *Ulysses*, Reason and
Discretion; and by his *Retinue*, the infe-
 rior Faculties, and Powers: And, in like
 Manner, the Prohibition of Swines Flesh
 was design'd to restrain the *Jews* from
 such Lusts, as *war against the Spirit*, as
 pollute and debase human Nature, like
 another Creature's wallowing in the Mire:
 For (as a learned Author observes) (m) the
Jewish Law was more remarkably strict
 in its Prohibitions of Things, that were
 sordid and slovenly; wherein it seems to
 have had an especial Aim to the training
 and forming of a People, that had liv'd
 uncultivated, by Reason of their long Slavery
 in *Egypt*; and their dirty Work in Clay
 and Bricks, to an Elegancy and Politeness
 of Manners, as well as a Detestation of all
 filthy and brutal Lusts, that, *being set free*
from Sin, (as the Apostle expresses it) (n)
they might glorify God in Purity and Holi-
ness, both in their Bodies, and in their
Spirits, which were his.

THE same Apostle, in his Epistle to
 the *Hebrews*, has inform'd us, that (o) the
Law made nothing perfect, but the Bringing
in of a better Hope, by which we draw nigh
unto God, did. The *Jewish High-Priest*
 was a Type of our blessed Saviour, and
 his Entrance into the *Holy of Holies*, of
 our Lord's Ascension into Heaven, after
 his Resurrection. The Sacrifices, which
 were offer'd under the *Levitical Law*,
 were previous Representations of the
 Death of Christ; and the Redemption of
 Mankind by the Effusion of his Blood
 was exhibited, every Day, in the several
 Oblations in the Tabernacle: (p) *For if*
the Blood of Bulls, and of Goats, and the
Ashes of an Heifer, sprinkling the Unclean,
sanctifieth to the purifying of the Flesh;
how much more shall the Blood of Christ,

From Exod.
 xxxiv. 28. to
 Numb. xviii.

Why God made
 use of Types in
 the Jewish Ser-
 vice.

6 T

who,

(l) *Joseph. de Bello Jud. Lib. vi. c. 3.*

(m) *Spencer, de Legibus Heb.*

(n) 1 Cor. vi. 20.

(o) Chap. vii. 19.

(p) Heb. ix. 13.

A. M.
2514, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1490, &c.

who, through the eternal Spirit, offer'd himself without Spot to God, purge the Conscience from dead Works, to serve the living God? Now, besides the Arguments, which might be drawn from the Grossness of the Jews Understanding, and their Incapacity to receive a more spiritual Dispensation, God might have this farther Design in setting before them the Mystery of Man's Redemption under such typical Representations, viz. that thereby he might excite their Industry, and give a fuller Scope to the Exercise of their Faith. For, that the Faith, and Hope, and other Graces of the Patriarchs, and devout Jews, were more effectually prov'd by the Exhibition of Things ambiguous and obscure, than if they had been altogether open'd in the fullest and plainest Propositions, is a Matter that can hardly be contested. To rest assur'd, that God wou'd bring to pass what he had expressly and circumstantially foretold, shew'd indeed a sincere and true Faith in general; but to be persuaded, that faint Resemblances, and the remotest Hints were pregnant with Certainty and Solidity, and wou'd, in their proper Time, be gloriously compleated, (how unintelligible soever they might be at present) was (if we may so call it) a *special Advance of heroick Faith*, and render'd their Dependance and Resignation as compleat as possible. And, accordingly, the *Apostle*, having enumerated several ancient *Worthies*, who, by Faith extended their Views, and look'd upon the Dispensation they were under, as no more than a *System of Types and Shadows of the good Things to come*, concludes their Character in the following Manner: (q) *And these all, having obtained a good Report through Faith, received not the Promise: God having provided some better Thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.* So that the Jewish Religion and Worship was, in some Respects, adapted to the Capacity, and Genius both of the *Learned* and *Ignorant*: Of the *Ignorant*,

as being made up of Pomp and Shew enough to attract their *Attention*; and of the *Learned*, as abounding with *Shadows*, and *Emblems* of higher Matters, enough to exercise their deepest *Contemplation*.

WHAT the Sin of offering *strange Fire* before the Lord was, and, upon what Account it rais'd the divine Indignation against *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the two Sons of *Aaron*, will best appear, by attending a little to the probable Occasion of it. After the Consecration of *Aaron* and his Sons to the priestly Office, we are told, that a miraculous *Fire from the Lord*, i. e. a Fire, which either came immediately down from Heaven, or out of the Cloud, which cover'd the *Tabernacle*, consum'd the first Victim, which *Aaron* offer'd for a *Burnt-Offering*; that God had expressly commanded, that (r) *the Fire, which was upon the Altar*, shou'd not be suffer'd to go out; which (according to the Consent of most Interpreters) signifies, that the said miraculous Fire, which had confirm'd the Installation of *Aaron* and his Sons after so surprizing a Manner, shou'd be kept *alive*, and burning with the utmost Care; and that, as, at this very Fire *Aaron* was (s) requir'd to light the *Incense* which he offer'd to God in the most holy Place, on the great Day of Expiation; so may we take it for granted, that the like Injunction was impos'd on the inferior Priests, with Relation to the Incense, which they were to offer every Day before God in the holy Place. We have indeed no mention made of such a Law, but the History, we are commenting upon, gives us strong Presumption, that the Use of this Fire only was permitted; and therefore the Words (t) in the Text, *which he commanded them not*, is thought to imply an express Prohibition of any other.

THE Crime then of *Nadab* and *Abihu* consisted in their kindling the *Incense*, which their Office of Priests oblig'd them to offer every Morning and Evening, with Fire, different from that which was continually

From Exod. xxxiv. 28. to Numb. xviii.

The Nature of Nadab and Abihu's Transgression.

(q) Heb. xi. 39, 40.

(r) Lev. vi. 12.

(s) Ibid. xvi. 12.

(t) Lev. x. 1.

A. M.
2514, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1490, &c.

tinually on the Altar of Burnt-Offerings, and consequently, different from what God order'd them to use. † Other Offences indeed have been laid to their Charge. Some pretend, that they endeavour'd to intrude into the *most holy Place*, which was not permitted them to enter; because, immediately after the Recital of the Manner of their Death, *Moses* in another Place relates, that God commanded him to speak unto *Aaron*, (*u*) *that he shou'd not come, at all Times, into the holy Place, within the Veil, before the Mercy Seat, that he died not*; but others insinuate, that they were guilty of Intemperance, at the Entertainment made at their *Installation*, because, after the Account of their fatal End, *Moses*, by God's Order, gives this Injunction to *Aaron*, and the Remainder of his Sons: (*x*) *Do not drink Wine, nor strong Drink, thou, nor thy Sons with thee, when ye go into the Tabernacle of the Congregation, lest ye die. It shall be a Statute for ever through your Generations, that ye may put Difference between Holy and Unholy, between Unclean and Clean.* But these are no more than bare Surmises, that have no proper Foundation in the foregoing Texts, nor is there any Occasion to hunt out for Passages to augment these Offenders Crime.

NADAB and *Abihu* had not only been admitted, in common with the rest of their Brethren, to the Honour of the *Priesthood*, which, among the *Jews* was a Dignity of no small Esteem; but had particular Motives, which the others had not, to the Observance of all God's Commandments, as having had the Privilege of seeing the *Symbols* of the Divine Presence, (on the *formidable Mount*, from whence his Laws were promulg'd) without being *consum'd*. The higher therefore their Station was, and the more

distinguishing the Favours they had receiv'd, the more provoking was their Affront, in attempting to adulterate an Ordinance of God's Institution. *Common Fire*, they thought, might serve the Purpose of burning Incense, as well as that which was held more *sacred*: At least, in the *Gaiety*, or rather *Naughtiness* of their Hearts, they were minded to make the Experiment, even in Opposition to the divine Command; and therefore (*y*) it was just and requisite in God (especially in the Beginning of the Priesthood, and when one Alteration of a divine Precept might, in Process of Time, be productive of many more) to inflict an *exemplary Punishment*, that others might bear, and fear, and not commit the like *Abomination*.

AND for this Reason, viz. the Injection of Terror into others, *Moses* is commanded to make no Lamentation, or funeral Pomp for them; which, among the *Jews*, who, of all other Nations, were so very sumptuous in their *Obsequies* of their deceas'd Friends, was accounted a fore Judgment. In the Case of *Jehoiakim* the King of *Judah*, the Commination of God is thought very terrible. (*z*) *They shall not lament for him, saying, ah my Brother, or ah Sister: They shall not lament for him, saying, ah Lord, or ah his Glory. He shall be buried with the Burial of an Ass, drawn, and cast forth beyond the Gates of Jerusalem.* Temporal Judgments however are not always sure Indications of the final Condemnation of the Persons on whom they fall, and therefore *Aaron* had no Occasion utterly to despond: On the contrary, he might presume, that the Justice of God, being satisfy'd with the *present Punishment* of his Sons, might be appeas'd, with Relation to their eternal State;

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

Aaron's Behaviour thereupon.

† The Author of the *Connection*, so often cited, supposes another Kind of Innovation to have been the Occasion of their untimely Death. God as yet, says he, had given no Law for the offering of Incense in *Censers*; all that had been commanded about it, was, that *Aaron* shou'd burn it upon the *Altar of Incense* every Morning and every Evening, but these Men took upon them to begin, and introduce a Service into Religion, which was not appointed, and which, if it had been suffer'd, wou'd have open'd a Door to great Irregularities; and therefore God, by an exemplary Judgment upon the first Offenders, put an effectual Stop to it. *Shuckford*, Vol. III. Lib. xi.

(u) Lev. xvi. 2.
xxii. 18, 19.

(x) Ibid. x. 9, 10.

(y) *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

(z) *Jer.*

A. M.
2514, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1490, &c.

State; and that tho' their (a) *Flesh was destroyed, yet their Spirits might be saved in the Day of the Lord*. He knew too, how much himself had offended in the Matter of the *golden Calf*, and might justly think, that God had call'd his Sin to Remembrance in the Destruction of his two Sons. He acknowledg'd therefore the Righteousness of God, in all that he had brought upon him, and, in the Phrase of Scripture, (b) *was dumb, and opened not his Mouth, because it was the Lord's doing*.

The Occasion
of the Difference
between
Moses and his
Brother and
Sister.

WHAT the Occasion of the Difference between *Moses* and his Brother *Aaron*, and Sister *Miriam* was, is not so very evident: The History indeed tells us, that (c) *they spake against Moses, because of the Ethiopian, or rather Arabian Woman, whom he had married*. The Generality of Interpreters suppose this Woman to be *Zipporah*, the Daughter of *Jethro*, whom he married in *Midian*; for those, who imagine her to have been another, can hardly get over this Difficulty — Why *Moses* shou'd set so bad an Example, as to marry, at two several Times, a *Foreigner*, rather than one of the Daughters of his People. The first Time indeed, that he did so, was, when he liv'd in a State of *Exile*, but was nevertheless kindly receiv'd in a Family of the best Distinction in the Place, which might be Inducement enough for his matching himself with one of the Daughters, since no express Precept against Matches of this Kind was then in Force. But now, that he was set at the Head of a People, who were to be separated from the rest of Mankind, and was conducting them into a Country, with

whose Inhabitants they were to have no matrimonial Intercourse, for fear of introducing Idolatry, it wou'd have been highly indecent, and unpopular, an Affront upon his own Country-Women, as well as a dangerous Inlet to Impiety, for him to have marry'd into an idolatrous Nation; nor wou'd his Brother and Sister have been the only Persons to clamour against him, but the whole Congregation wou'd have risen up in Arms, upon so notorious a Provocation. Since therefore we hear of no such Commotion, we may reasonably conclude, that this *Cushite*, or *Arabian Woman*, was the same *Zipporah*, whom he had marry'd some forty Years before. But then why they shou'd quarrel with him upon her Account, at this Time, and no sooner, is the Difficulty.

Now to resolve this we must observe, that when *Jethro*, his Father-in-law, was in the Camp, it was by his Advice that *Moses* (d) instituted Judges to determine lesser Causes; and that he found his Son *Hobab* so very serviceable to him in the Capacity of a *Camp-master-general*, that || he earnestly entreated him to continue with him, and receiv'd him, no doubt, into great Confidence. It is to be observ'd farther, that, in the foregoing Chapter, we have an Account of the Creation of the *seventy Elders* to assist in the Administration, and that these Elders were nominated by *Moses*, without ever consulting *Aaron* or *Miriam*. As therefore this Story of their quarrelling with him is immediately subjoin'd, it seems very likely, that, taking themselves to be neglected, in so great an Alteration made in the Government without their Advice, they were very

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

(a) 1 Cor. v. 5.

(b) Psal. xxxix. 9.

(c) Numb. xii. 1.

(d) Exod. xviii. 21, 22.

|| *Moses's* Words to *Hobab* are these: — Leave us not, I pray thee, forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the Wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of Eyes. Numb. x. 31. But if the Being, which resided in the miraculous Cloud, was their Guide, what Need was there for *Hobab's* Stay? Now the Design of the Cloud was to direct the People when to decamp, and where to encamp again; but for the securing of their Camp against all hostile Force they were left to human Means: And therefore *Hobab*, having liv'd long a Borderer upon the Wilderness, was well acquainted with every Part of it, and the better able to advise them both whence to provide themselves with such Things as they wanted, and how to secure themselves against any neighbouring Powers, that shou'd attempt to assault them; and for these Reasons *Moses* was so pressing for his staying with him, though the *Septuagint* understand the Passage, as if he desir'd him to continue to be what he had hitherto been in the Wilderness, viz. a good Adviser, like his Father *Jethro*, and withal assur'd him, that he would look upon him as an Elder. *Patrick's Commentary*.

A. M.
2514, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1490, &c.

very angry; but, not daring to charge *Moses* directly, they fell foul upon his Wife, giving her opprobrious Names, and complaining to the People very probably, that she, and her Brother, had too much Power and Influence over *Moses*.

Why *Moses*
mentions it.

JOSEPHUS, in his *Jewish History*, makes no mention of this Family-Difference, as thinking that it might reflect Discredit upon his Nation; but *Moses* was an Author of more *Veracity*, than to conceal any Action, which was proper for Mankind to know, even though it tended to the lasting Disgrace of his own Family. For he does not affect to aggrandize the Thing, or to make his Family appear more considerable, when he introduces God as arbitrating the Difference between them; but purely to acquaint us, that, as the *Israelites* liv'd then under a *Theocracy*, God himself, being their *immediate King*, undertook to decide their Controversies depending between such his chief *Ministers*, as were not accountable to any other Judge; nor was the divine Majesty any more *debas'd* in condescending to make this Decision, than any earthly *Prince* wou'd be, by interposing his Authority to determine a Controversy between two of his great and powerful Subjects.

Why *Moses*
might commend
himself, with-
out endangering
the Authen-
tickness of his
Writings.

Moses indeed inserts a Passage, to shew, that the Occasion of this Family-Quarrel was not from him; that he was a Man of a meek and peaceable Disposition, and therefore not addicted to Strife and Contention, especially with those of his own Kindred; and why might he not insert this, when it was no more than what was due to his Character, and perhaps, at that Time, necessary for his own Vindication. *St Paul*, to clear himself from some Aspersions, which the Malice of his Enemies had cast upon him, enters upon his own Commendation tho' it be with some Reluctancy, and to give it a better *Gloss*, tries all the Powers of Eloquence in working it up. (c) *Whereinsoever any is bold*, says he, *I speak foolishly, I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? So*

am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the Seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they Ministers of Christ? I speak as a Fool, I am more: In Labours more abundant, in Stripes above Measure: In Prisons more frequent: In Deaths often. In Perils of Waters, in Perils of Robbers, in Perils by my own Countrymen, in Perils by the Heathen, in Perils in the City, in Perils in the Wilderness, in Perils in the Sea, in Perils among false Brethren: In Weariness and Painfulness, in Watchings often; in Hunger and Thirst, in Fastings often; in Cold and Nakedness; besides those Things, that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the Care of all the Churches. These are the Words of our Apostle, setting off the faithful Discharge of his Ministry; and yet no one ever suspected the *Genuineness* of this his Epistle to the *Corinthians* upon that Account: As little Reason have we therefore, to call in Question the *Authentickness* of this Book of *Moses*, because we find a Passage or two that speaks favourably of him.

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

THAT all Historians, both *antient* and *modern*, when they come to speak of the Part, and Concern, they had in such and such Actions, are commonly accusom'd to speak in the *third Person*; and that the modestest Man upon Earth may sometimes see Occasion to magnify his Office, or vindicate himself, without deserving the Imputation of Vanity or Arrogance, cannot be deny'd. Now considering what Share it was, that *Moses* himself bore in the Facts which he relates, and that the Narrations, Laws, and Admonitions which he recorded, were not design'd for that Age only, but directed to all succeeding Generations of the World; and withal considering, that the seditious and turbulent Behaviour of his Brother and Sister at that Time oblig'd him to justify and clear himself; there was no imaginable Way more proper for him to express himself in, than that which he made Use of, even had it been a Matter of his own Study and Con-

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trivance:

A. M.
2514, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1490, &c.

That there
was no Juggle
in Aaron's
Rod's blossom-
ing.

trivance : But then, if we suppose, that he wrote by divine Inspiration, the Commendation that is given of his natural Lenity and good Nature, must be look'd upon, rather as the *Holy Ghost's* Testimony concerning *Moses*, than *Moses's* Testimony concerning himself.

THO' *Moses* was certainly a good-natur'd Man, and therefore cou'd not live long at Variance with his Brother *Aaron*, yet we can hardly suppose, that his Love and Affection for him wou'd ever prevail with him to enter into any fraudulent Measures, in order to raise him to the *Pontificate*. The *Rod*, which gave *Aaron* the Preference, was not (as we noted before) *Moses's* wonder-working Rod, but, in all Probability, one of the same Tree, from whence the Princes of the other Tribes cut theirs. All these Rods, with the Names of the several Tribes engrav'd upon them, were deliver'd to *Moses* in the Face of the whole Congregation, and by him were instantly carry'd into the Tabernacle : And, that he did not palm upon the People, when his Back was turn'd, and put an *Almond Twig* into the Place of *Aaron's* Rod, is evident from what is related of it, viz. that it had Leaves, Buds, Blossoms, and ripe Fruit upon it, all at one Time, which no Tree of any Kind ever was known to have before.

SOME of the Vulgar and less Curious might perhaps, at a cursory View, have been impos'd upon, by a sham Appearance of these Things painted on *Aaron's* Rod : But *Moses* knew very well that he had the *Heads* of each Tribe to deal with ; Men of Sagacity, and Observation, and who were too nearly concern'd in the *Experiment* to let any Pretence to a Miracle go unexamin'd : And therefore we may very well imagine, that when he brought forth all the Rods the next Morning, they survey'd every one very carefully, and made diligent Search into the Altera-

tion, which had pass'd upon that, which belong'd to *Aaron* ; and had they found any Deception in it, wou'd have expos'd the two Brothers to Contempt and Ridicule, or rather have depos'd them from all Rule and Power for the Future, as a Couple of vile and impious *Impostors*. But, instead of that, we find that this Miracle silenc'd all Cavils for ever after against *Aaron* and his Family ; confirm'd the Authority of *Moses* ; and made the People (when he told them, that, by God's Appointment, he had laid up *Aaron's* Rod to be a Witness against them, that, if they murmur'd any more, they shou'd most certainly be destroy'd) break out into this doleful Complaint ; (f) *Behold we die, we perish, we all perish, and shall be consumed with dying* : For they began now to believe God's Threatnings, and to fear, that at one Time or other they shou'd experience some heavy and severe Punishment, as, by this *new Sign*, he had convinc'd them that they justly deserv'd it.

THUS I have endeavour'd to answer most of the material Objections, which have industriously been rais'd against the *sacred* History of this *Period* ; and were it any farther Confirmation of its Truth and Authority, I might add, (g) that the whole Matter of *Korah*, how he rebell'd against *Moses*, and made a Defection among the People, for which he suffer'd the very Judgment that the Scripture relates, was doubtless of standing Tradition in the *East*, which the *Mahometans* have borrow'd, and given us at second Hand : That the Consumption of *Aaron's* Sacrifice (h) by the Fire which came from the Lord, rais'd the Report, (i) that, in ancient Times, Men did not kindle Fire upon their Altars, but call'd it down from Heaven by Prayer, and that the Flame was produc'd by the Deity, to whom the Sacrifice was offer'd : That the Irradiation of *Moses's* Face, when he came down from the

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

(f) Numb. xvii. 12, 13.

(g) *Calmet's* Dictionary, under the Word *Korah*.

(h) Lev. ix. 24.

(i) *Servius* in *Æneid*. Lib. xii. ver. 200, and *Patrick's* Commentary in *Locum*. From the Fire of the Altar, which, in the *Mosaick* Language, was call'd the *Fire of the Lord*, as it came down from Heaven, and was perpetually kept burning, 'tis obvious at first Sight, that the *Greeks* deriv'd, in the Way of Etymology, their *estia*, and the *Romans* their *Vestal Fire*, so famous in all History. *Bibliotheca Bibl.* on *Numb.* Annot. 2.

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the Mount, introduc'd the Custom among the Heathens, of adorning the Images of their Gods and Heroes with a beamy Glory about their Heads : That the Veneration paid to his Wonder-working Rod, establish'd an Usage, which prevails almost every where, (k) for the great Ministers of State to carry in their Hands Wands, as Ensigns of their Office, whenever they appear at Court ; and that the budding of his Brother *Aaron's* Rod, in all Probability, gave Rise to (l) the Fable of *Hercules's* Club, when left in the Ground, striking Root downward, and so reviving, and repululating. But I chuse rather, in this Place, to remark the great Affinity between the divine and human Laws, so far as they relate to what we call the *Decalogue*, inso-much that, whatever the antient heathen Law-givers have enacted about these Matters, seems little more than a Transcript from the Ten Commandments, which *Moses* deliver'd to the *Jews*.

THUS, the *Unity of God*, and the *Folly of making any Image* of him (which constitute the two first Commandments) was an (m) Institution of *Numa*, which he took from *Pythagoras*, who maintain'd that there was only one supreme Being, and that, as he is perfectly spiritual, and the Object of the Mind only, no visible Representation can be made of him. *The Reverence of God's holy Name* (which is the Subject of the third) was recogniz'd by the Heathens in all their solemn Contracts, Promises, and Affeверations ; and for this Reason, *Plato* (in his Book *de Legibus*) acquaints us, that it is (n) an excellent Lesson, to be very cautious and tender, in so much as mentioning the very Name of God. The setting apart one Day in seven, and the Observation of it for religious Purposes, was a Practice so general in the Pagan World, that, according to *Philo*, this seventh Day was truly call'd 'Εορτή πανδημία, or the universal Festival, and by the *Athenians*, according to the Laws then

in force, was observ'd with the utmost Strictness, and such as admitted of no servile Work. The *Honour and Respect due to Parents*, was secur'd by that excellent Law made by *Solon*, which declares, (o) that, if any one strike his Parents, or does not maintain them, and provide them a Dwelling, and all Things necessary, let him be utterly disregarded, and banish'd from all civil Society. The *Prohibition of Murder* is confirm'd by the Laws of *Athens*, which make its Punishment capital, when wilfully committed ; Banishment, when by Chance-medley, and for every Maim, designedly given, imposes both a Confiscation of Goods, and a Proscription from the City, where the injur'd Person dwells. The *Prohibition of Adultery* was sufficiently enforc'd by *Solon*, when he left the guilty Persons, when depreded in the Fact, to the Mercy of the injur'd Husband, who, if he suffer'd them to escape with their Lives, had Licence to handle the Man very roughly, (p) and to divorce the Woman, who, for her Crime, was excluded all Places of publick Concourse, and reduc'd below the Condition of a Slave. The *Prohibition of Theft* was supported by a Law of *Draco's*, which made Felons of what Denomination soever lose their Lives for their Crime ; but this being thought too severe, *Solon's* Institution was, that every petty Larceny shou'd be punish'd with double Restitution, and sometimes Imprisonment, but every greater Robbery, to the Value of fifty *Drachms*, with Death. The *Prohibition of false Witness* was (q) ratify'd by the *Athenian* Laws, which not only punish'd the Offenders with Fines, Confiscation of Goods, and Banishment, but degraded them likewise from all Dignity, as Persons extreamly ignominious, and who (according (r) to the Law of the twelve Tables) deserv'd to be thrown from the *Tarpeian* Rock. The *Prohibition of Covetousness* of all Kinds, (which is the Tenth and last Commandment)

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

(k) Huet. Quest. Ainet.
on Exod. xx. 4.
bishop Potter's Greek Antiquities.

(l) Huet. ibid.
(n) De Leg. Lib. ii.

(m) Clem. Alex. Strom. Lib. v. and Bibliotheca Bibl.
(q) Bibliotheca Bibl. ibid.

(o) Bibliotheca Bibl. on Deut. Dissert. 3.

(p) Arch.
(r) A. Gell. Lib. xii. chap. 1.

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2514, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1490, &c.

ment) no where occurs in the Edicts of any ancient Legislator; for (as (s) a pious Bishop well observes) *all the Laws, that were ever made by any Governours upon Earth, respected only the Words and Actions, or the outward Carriage and Behaviour of their Subjects. None ever offer'd to give Laws to the Minds, or Hearts of Men, what they shou'd think, or love, or desire, or the like; and it wou'd have been ridiculous and absurd to have done it, because they cou'd never have known, whether such Laws were observ'd or no; so proper*

is the Question, which their great Law-giver puts to the Jews, (t) *what Nation is there so great, that hath Statutes and Judgments so righteous, as all this Law, which I set before you this Day? So just the Commendation, which the Royal Psalmist gives of it. The Law of the Lord is an undefiled Law, converting the Soul: The Testimony of the Lord is sure, and giveth Wisdom unto the Simple — Moreover by them is thy Servant taught, and in keeping of them there is great Reward.*

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

DISSERTATION II.

Of the Jewish TABERNACLE, &c.

FROM the very first Beginning of Time, God had always some Place appropriated to the solemn Duties of religious Worship. (u) Even during the small Space of his Continuance in *Paradise*, Adam had (x) where to present himself before the Lord; and after his Expulsion from thence, his Sons, in like Manner, had (y) whither to bring their Oblations and Sacrifices. The Patriarchs, both before and after the Flood, us'd (z) Altars, and (a) Mountains, and (b) Groves, for the self-same Purpose. Here they had their *Proseuchæ*, or Places for Prayer, which were certain Plats of Ground, encompass'd with a Wall, or some other Enclosure, and open'd above. But since the first Place of this Kind, that made any considerable Figure, was the *Tabernacle*, which God order'd Moses to erect in the Wilderness, as an Habitation for his Majesty's Presence to reside in, it may not be improper, in this Place, to give some Account of it, and the other holy Things appertaining to it.

THE *Tabernacle* was a Tent, cover'd with Curtains and Skins, but much larger,

than other Tents: It was in the Form of an oblong Square, thirty Cubits in Length, and ten in Height and Breadth, and was properly divided into two Parts, viz. the *Holy Place*, and the *Holy of Holies*. The *Holy Place* was twenty Cubits long, and ten wide, where stood the Table of Shew-Bread, the Golden Candlestick, and the Altar of Incense. The *Holy of Holies* (which was likewise call'd the *Sanctuary*) was ten Cubits long, and ten broad, contain'd the *Ark of the Covenant*, and was separated from the *Holy Place* by a *Veil*, or Hanging made of rich embroider'd Linnen, which hung upon four Pillars of *Shittim* or Cedar Wood, that were cover'd with Plates of Gold, but had their Bases made of Brass; and at the Entrance of the *Tabernacle*, instead of a Door, there was a Veil of the same Work, sustain'd by the like Pillars, which separated it from the outward Court.

TEN Boards, or Planks, whereof the Body of the *Tabernacle* was compos'd, were in all forty-eight, each a Cubit and an half wide, and ten Cubits high. Twenty of them went to make up one Side

A Description
of the Tabernacle.

(s) Bishop Beveridge, upon the Catechism.

xvii. 12, 13.

xviii. 4.

(v) Hooker's Eccles. Polity, Lib. v.

(b) Ibid. xxii. 1.

(t) Dent. iv. 8. and Psal. xix. 7, &c.

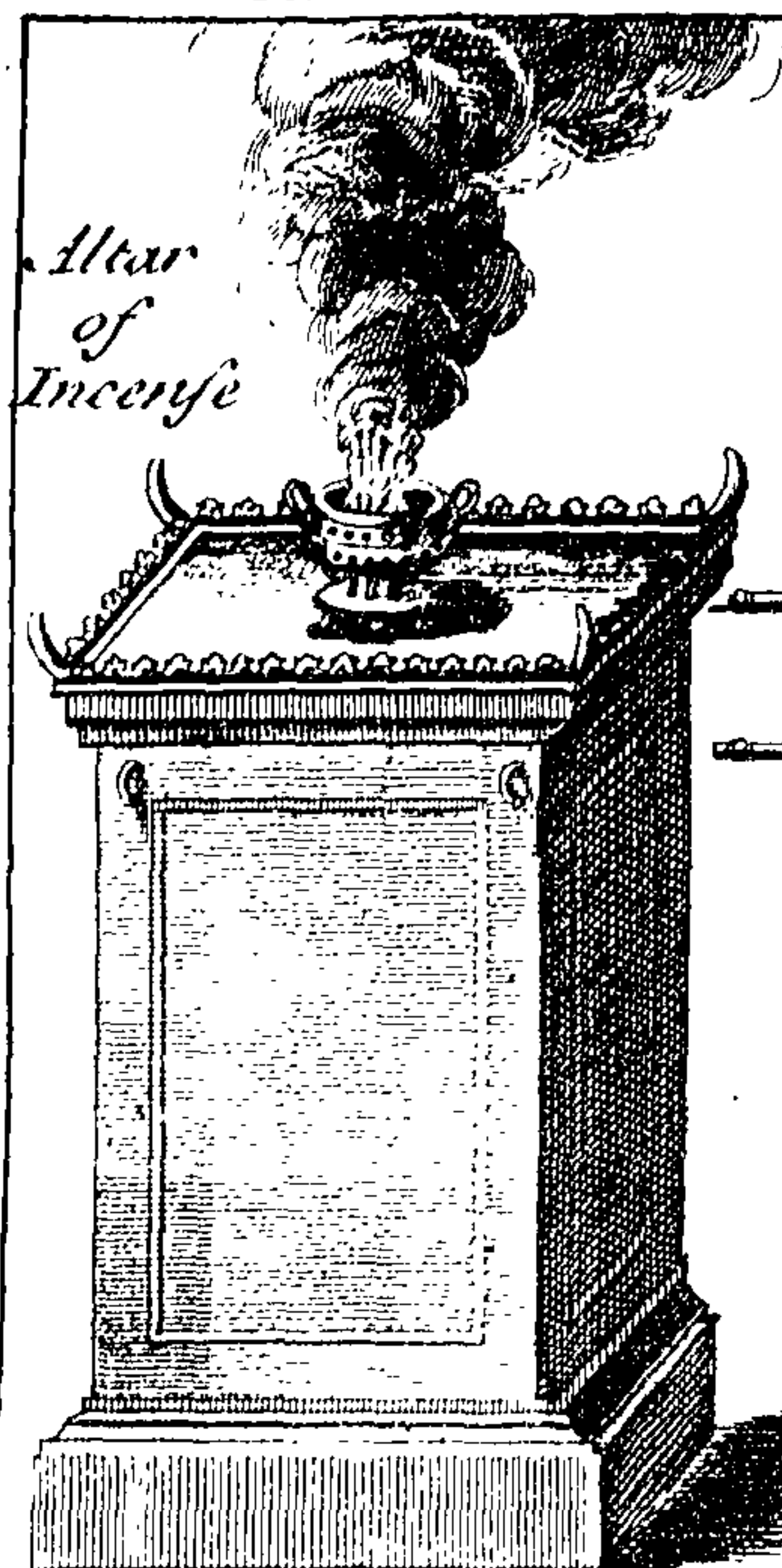
(y) Gen. iii. 8.

(c) Ibid. xxi. 33.

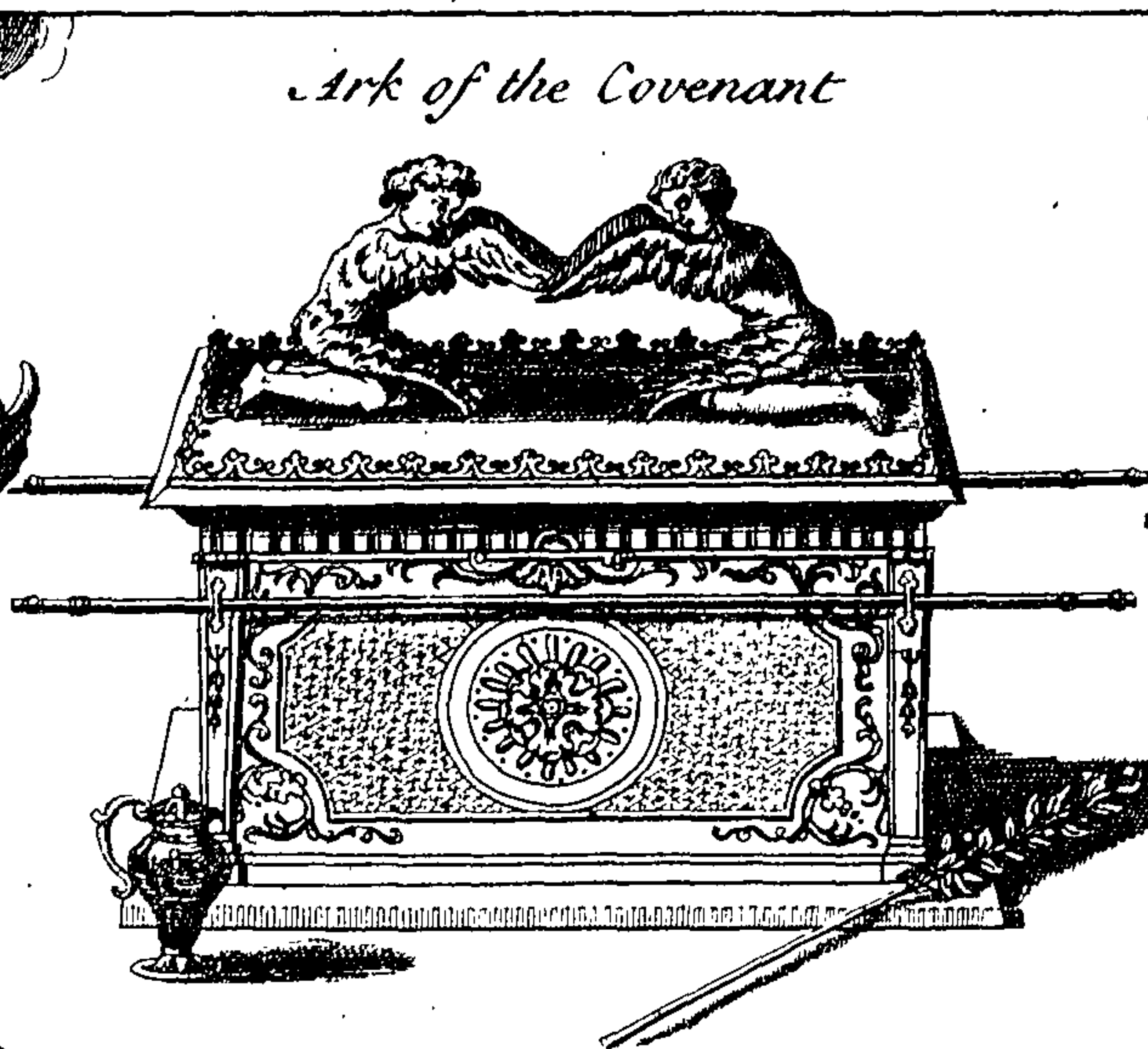
(z) Ibid. iv. 3.

(u) Numb.

(a) Ibid.



Altar
of
Incense



Ark of the Covenant

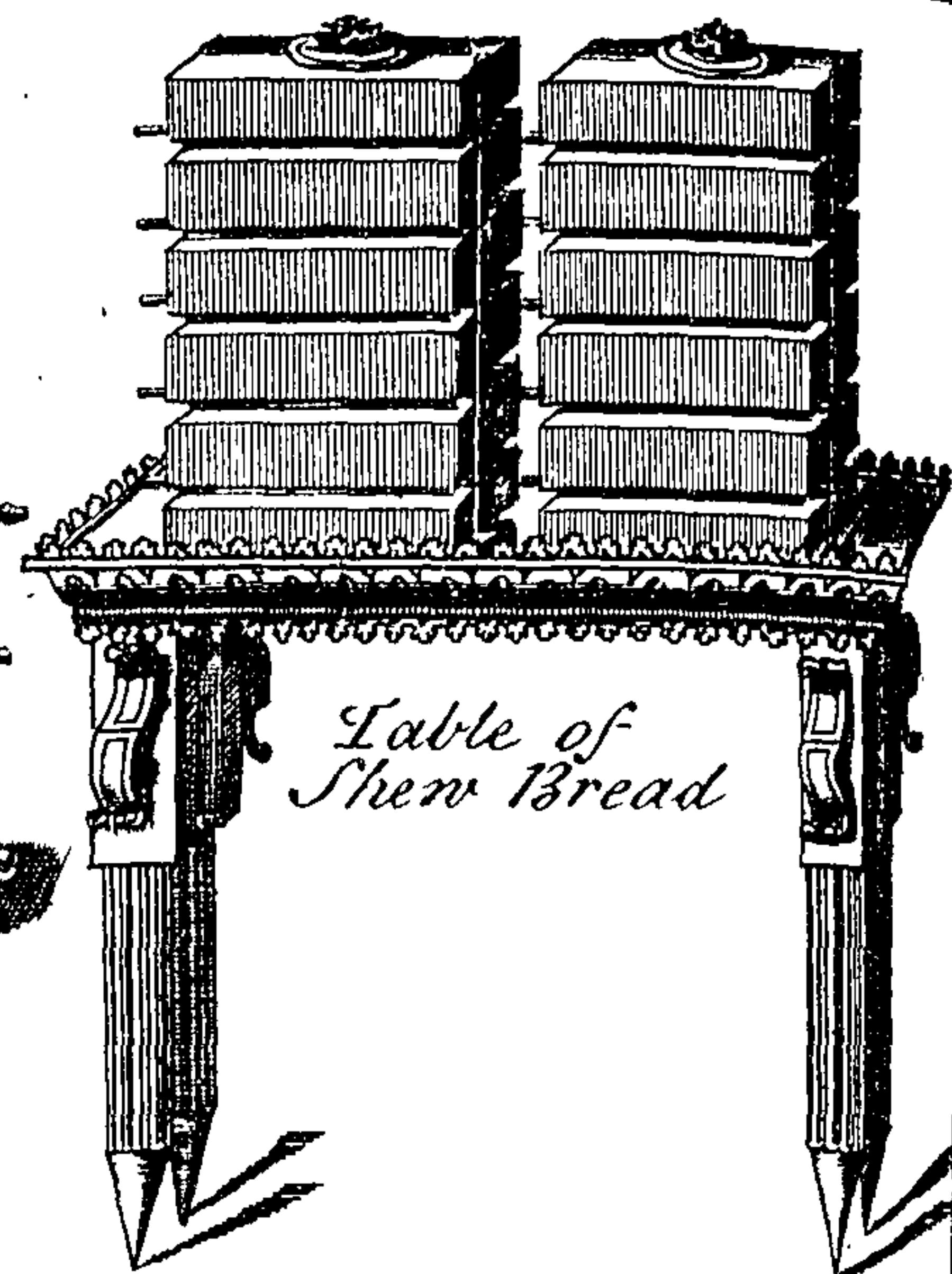
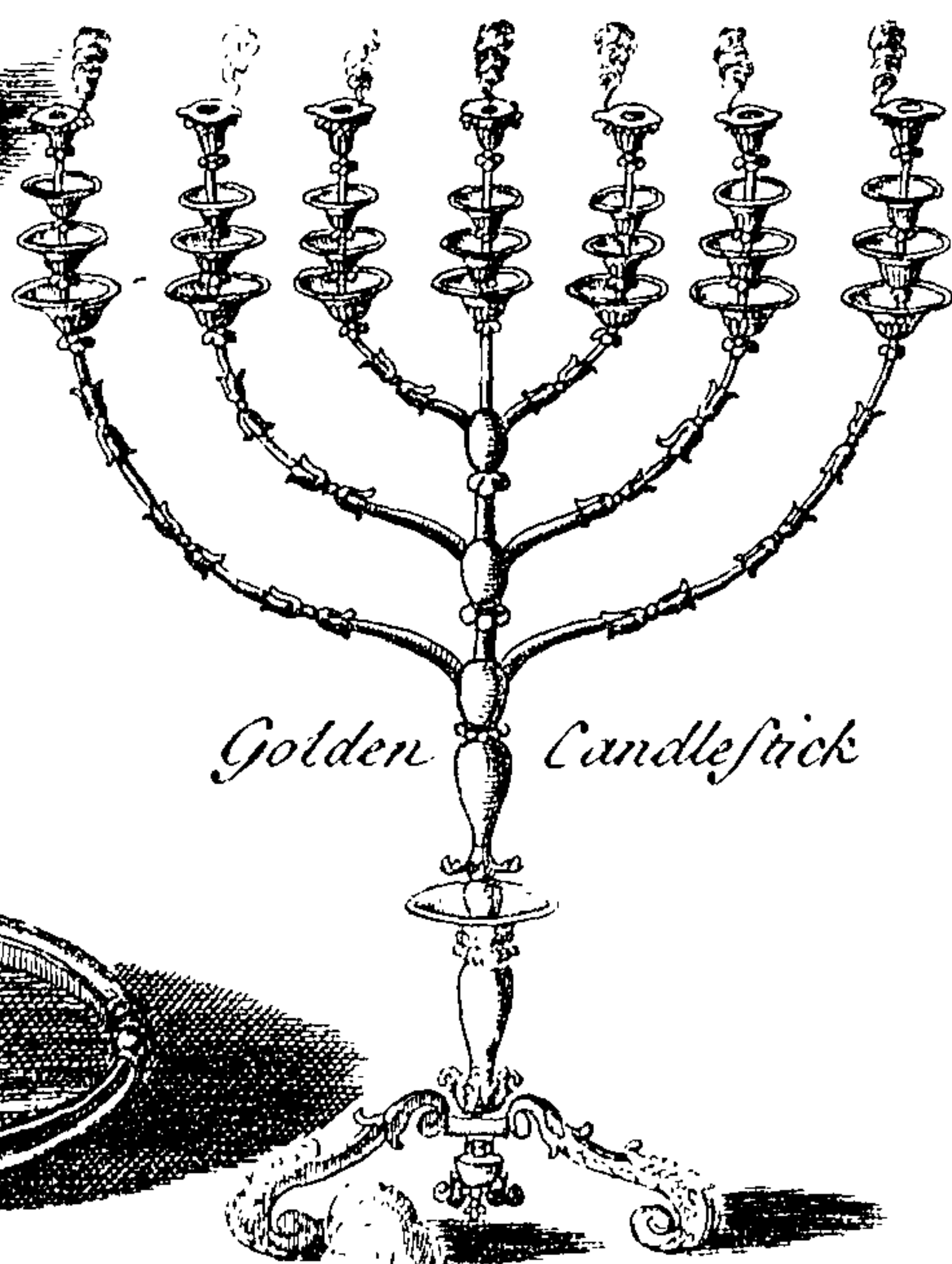


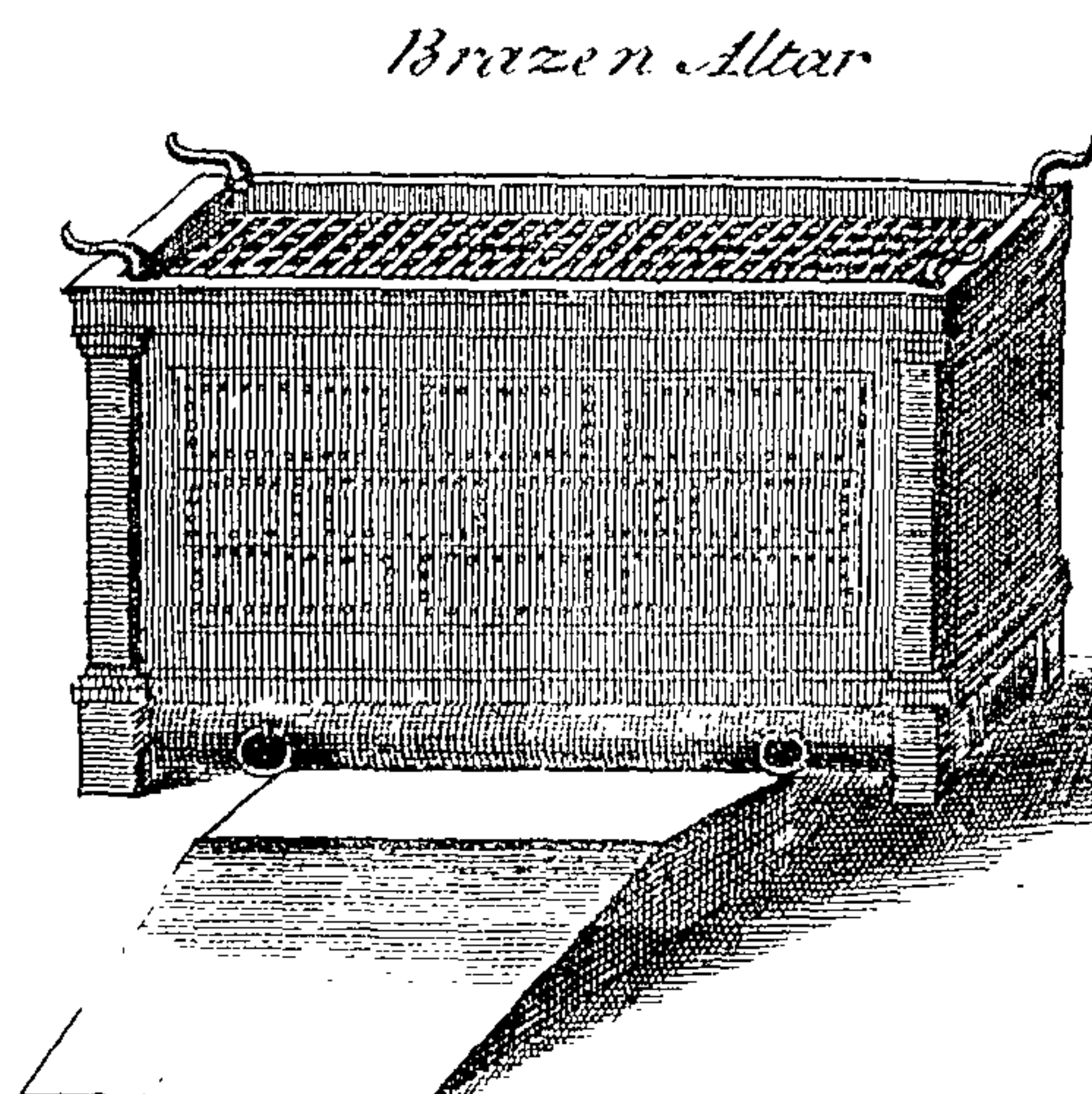
Table of
Shew Bread



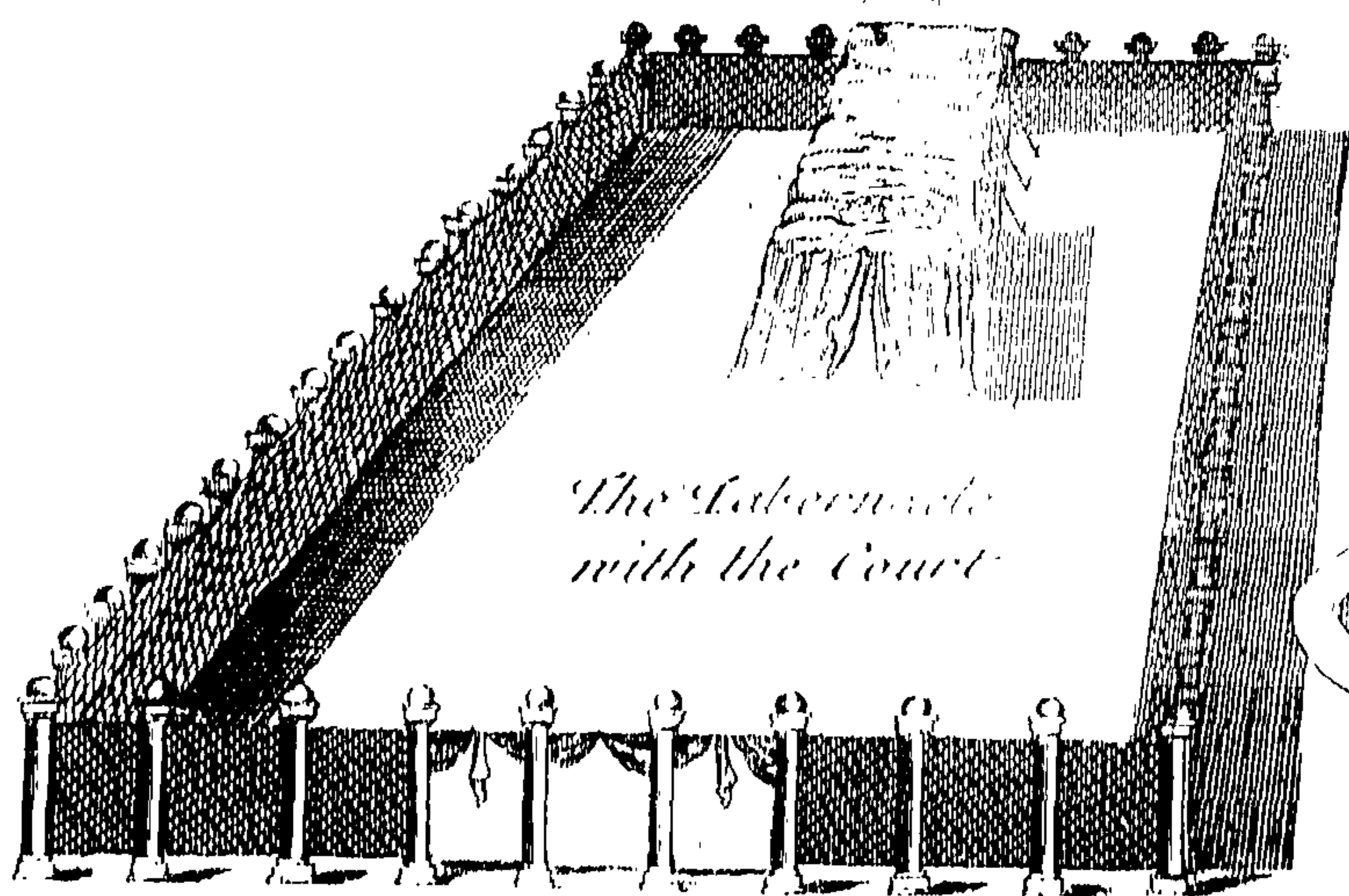
Brazen Laver



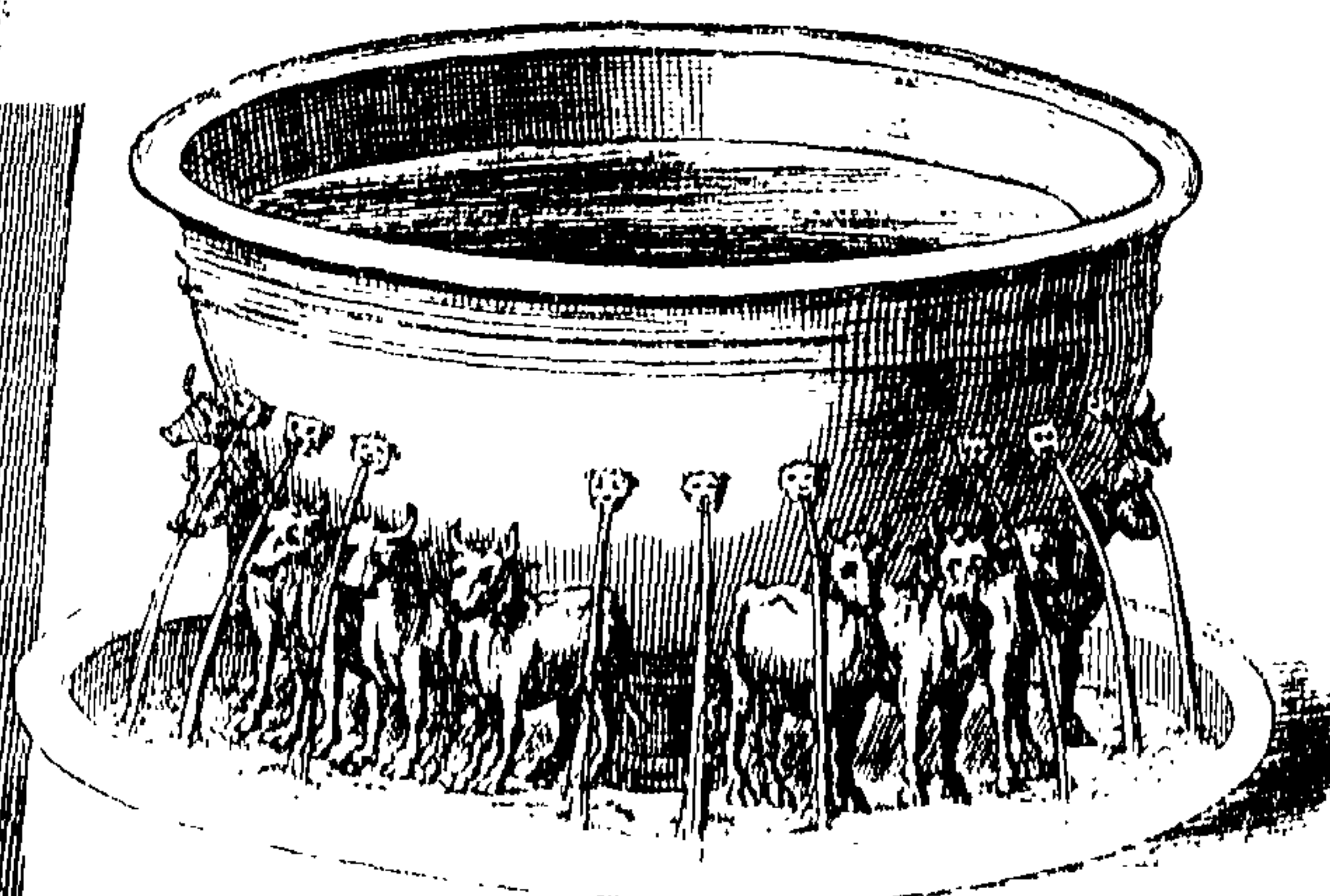
Golden Candlestick



Brazen Altar



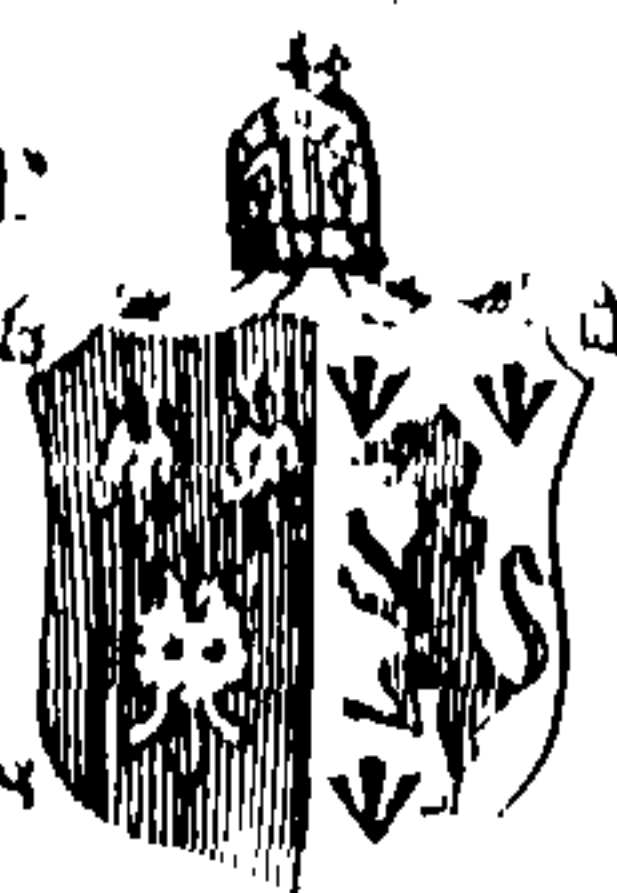
The Tabernacle
with the Court



Brazen Sea

J. A. Mynde Sc.

To the Right Reverend Father
of Hereford this Plate is
his Lordship's most Dutifull
Thomas



in God HENRY Lord Bishop
most humbly Inscribed by
& Obedient Son and Servant
Stackhouse

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2514, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1490, &c.

Side of the Tabernacle, and twenty the other, and at the *West End* of it were the other eight, which were all let into one another by two *Tenons* above and below, and compacted together by Bars running from one End to the other; but the *East End* of it was open, and only cover'd with a rich Curtain.

THE *Roof* of the Tabernacle was a square Frame of Planks, resting upon their Bases; and, over these, were Coverings, or Curtains of different Kinds. Of these the *first*, on the Inside, was made of fine Linnen, curiously embroider'd in various Colours of Crimfon, and Scarlet, and Purple, and Hyacinth: The *next* was made of Goats Hair neatly wove together; and the *last* of Sheep and Badgers Skins, (some dy'd Red, and others of azure Blue) which were to preserve the rich Curtains from wet, and to protect the Tabernacle itself from the Injuries of the Weather.

The Court.

ROUND about the Tabernacle was a large oblong *Court*, an hundred Cubits long, and fifty broad, encompass'd with Pillars overlaid with Silver, and whose Capitals were of the same Metal, but their Bases were of Brass. Ten of these Pillars stood towards the *West*, six to the *East*, twenty to the *North*, and twenty to the *South*, at five Cubits Distance from each other; and over these hung Curtains made of twined Linnen-thread, in the Manner of Net-work, which furrounded the Tabernacle on all Sides, except at the *Entrance* of the Court, which was twenty Cubits wide, and sustain'd with four *Columns*, over-laid with Plates of Silver. These Columns had their *Capitals* and *Bases* of Brass; were plac'd at proportionable Distances, and cover'd with a Curtain made of richer Materials.

The Altar of
Burnt Offer-
ings.

IN this Court, and opposite to the Entrance of the Tabernacle, stood the *Altar of Burnt-Offerings* in the open Air, that the Fire, which was kept perpetually upon it, and the Smoke arising from the Victims, that were burnt there, might not spoil the Inside of the Tabernacle. It was five Cubits long, as much in Width, and three

Cubits high; was plac'd upon a Basis of Stone Work, and cover'd, both within and without, with Brass Plates. At the four Corners of this Altar there was something like four Horns, cover'd with the same Metal, and, as the Altar itself was hollow, and open both at Top and Bottom, from these Horns there hung a Grate made of Brass, (fasten'd with four Rings and four Chains) whereon the Wood and the Sacrifice were burnt; and as the Ashes fell through, they were receiv'd below in a Pan. At a very small Distance from this Altar there stood, on the *South Side*, a brazen Vessel, which on Account of its extraordinary Size, was call'd the *Brazen Sea*, in which the Priests were us'd to wash their Feet, whenever they were to offer Sacrifice, or to go into the Tabernacle.

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

IN that Part of the Tabernacle, which was call'd the *Holy Place*, there was, on the *North Side*, a Table made of *Shittim* or Cedar Wood, cover'd with Gold, two Cubits long, one in Breadth, and one and an half in ~~Length~~ ^{height}. About the Edge of it was an Ornament, or Border made of Gold, together with a Crown of Gold in the Middle, and, at each End was plac'd the Offering of the *Shew-Bread*, viz. six Loaves in a Pile to represent the twelve Tribes. The Bread was chang'd every Day, and not allow'd to be eaten by any but the Priests.

The Table of
Shew-Bread.

OVER against this Table, on the *South Side*, stood the Candlestick, which was made of pure Gold, upon a Basis of the same Metal, and had seven Branches on each Side, and one in the Middle. These Branches were, at equal Distances, adorn'd with six Flowers like Lillies, with as many Knobs like Apples, and little Bowls like half Almond-Shells, plac'd alternately; and upon each of these Branches there was a golden Lamp, which was lighted every Evening, and extinguish'd every Morning.

The Golden
Candlestick.

BETWIXT the Table and the Candlestick, was plac'd the *Altar of Incense*, which was but one Cubit in Length and

And the Altar
of Incense.

6 X

Breadth,

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2514, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1490, &c.

Breadth, and two Cubits high; but was cover'd with Plates of Gold, and had a Crown of Gold over it. Every Morning and Evening, the Priest in Waiting for that Week offer'd Incense of a particular Composition upon this Altar, and to this End carry'd a smoking Censer, fill'd with Fire, which he took from the Altar, of Burnt-Offerings, into the Tabernacle, and so, placing it upon this other Altar, retir'd.

The High-Priest, and his Vestments.

THE Persons appointed to officiate about holy Things were of three Kinds, the High-Priest, Priests, and Levites: And, what is very remarkable in the first of this Order, is, the Singularity of his *Vestments*, which were the Breast-plate, the Ephod, the Robe, the Close-coat, the Mitre, and the Girdle. The *Ephod*, the *Robe*, and the *Close-coat* were all of Linnen, and cover'd the whole Body from the Neck to the Heel. Over these was a purple or blue *Tunick*, which reach'd not so low, but was curiously wrought all over, and, at the Bottom of it, had Pomegranates, and Bells, intermix'd at equal Distances. The Pomegranates were made of blue, purple, and crimson Wool, and * the Bells of Gold.

The Ephod.

THE *Ephod* was a Kind of Girdle, made of gold Thread, and other Threads of divers Colours, which, being brought from behind the Neck, and over the two Shoulders, was put cross upon the Stomach; then carry'd round the Waist, and brought back again about the Body did gird the *Tunick* like a *Sash*, and so fell down

before, and hung as low as the Feet. Upon that Part of the *Ephod*, which came upon the High-Priest's Shoulders, were two large precious Stones, whereon were engraven the Names of the twelve Tribes of *Israel*, on each Stone six; and, where the *Ephod* cross'd the High-Priests Breast, there was a square Ornament, call'd the *Pectoral*, or *Rational*, wherein were twelve precious Stones set, with the Names of the twelve Tribes engraven on them, on each Stone one. The *Mitre* was of fine Flax: It cover'd the Head; and on the Forehead was a Plate of Gold, whereon were engrav'd these Words, HOLINESS TO THE LORD, which was ty'd, behind the Head, with two Ribbons fasten'd to its two Ends.

From Exod. xxxiv. 28. to Numb. xviii.

The Pectoral.

The Mitre.

THESE were the chief of the solemn Ornaments, which belong'd to the High-Priest. The other Priests had only a simple *Tunick*, a Linnen *Mitre*, and a *Girdle*; but they all of them wore Linnen or Cotton *Breeches*, which cover'd their Legs and Thighs, and reach'd up to their Waist. The *Levites* had no peculiar Habit in the Ceremonies of Religion; but, about the sixty-second Year of *Christ*, they obtain'd of King *Agrippa* Leave to wear a Linnen *Tunick*, as well as the Priests.

The Habits of other Officers.

THE *High-Priest* was at the Head of all religious Affairs, and the ordinary Judge of all the Difficulties, which related to them. He only had the Privilege of entering into the *Sanctuary* once a Year, which was on the Day of solemn *Expiation*,

The Office of the Priests.

to

* What the Number of the Bells, worn by the High-Priest, was, the Scripture is silent, and Authors are not so well agreed, but the sacred Historian has let us into the Use and Intent of them in these Words; *And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: And his Sound shall be heard when he goeth into the Holy Place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.* The Kings of *Persia* are said to have the Hem of their Robes adorn'd, like the *Jewish* High-Priest, with Pomegranates, and gold Bells. The Ladies, who were about his Person, and whose Business it is to please and divert him, have little gold Bells fasten'd to their Legs, their Neck, and Elbows, and when they dance, the Sound of these makes a very agreeable Harmony. The *Arabian* Princesses wear large hollow Gold Rings, which are fill'd with little Flints, and make a Sound, like little Bells, when they walk; and besides these, they have Abundance of little flat Bobs fasten'd to the Ends of their Hair, which make a Noise, as often as they stir, and give Notice that the Mistress of the House is going by, that so the Servants of the Family may behave themselves respectfully, and Strangers retire, to avoid seeing the Person that is passing. It was therefore, in all Probability, with a Design of giving Notice, that the High-Priest was passing by, that he too wore little Bells on the Hem of his Robe; or rather, it was (as it were) a Kind of publick Notice, that he was going into the *Sanctuary*; for, as in the King of *Persia's* Court, no one was suffer'd to enter the Apartments, without giving Notice thereof by the Sound of something; so the High-Priest, out of Respect to the divine Presence, residing in the *Holy of Holies*, did, by the Sound of little Bells, fasten'd to the Bottom of his Robe, desire, as it were, Permission to enter, that the Sound of the Bells might be heard, and he not punished with Death for an unmannerly Intrusion. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the Word *Bell*.

A. M.
2514, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1490, &c.

to make Atonement for the Sins of the whole People. The *ordinary* Priests attended the Service of the Tabernacle: They kept up a perpetual *Fire* upon the Altar of *Burnt-Offerings*; lighted, and extinguish'd the *Lamps* of the *golden-Candlestick*; made the Loaves of Shew-Bread; offer'd them on the *golden Altar* in the Sanctuary; chang'd them every *Sabbath-day*; and every Day, at Night and Morning, carry'd in a smoking Censer of Incense, and plac'd it upon the golden Table, which upon this Account was likewise call'd the *Altar of Incense*.

The several
Sorts of Sa-
crifices.

BUT the chief Business of the Priests was to offer Sacrifices, of which there were four Kinds. 1. The *Burnt-Offering*, which was totally consum'd by Fire upon the Altar, after that the Feet and Entrails had been wash'd. 2. The *Peace-Offering*, whereof the inward Fat, or Tallow, made up with the Liver and Kidnies, was only burnt upon the Altar: The Breast and right Shoulder was the *Perquisite* of the Priests, who were oblig'd to eat them in the *Holy Place*; and the Remainder belong'd to the Person, who offer'd the Sacrifice. 3. The *Sacrifice for Sin*, committed either *wilfully* or *ignorantly*: And in this the Priest took some of the Blood of the Victim, dipp'd his Finger in it, and sprinkled it seven Times towards the Vail of the *Sanctuary*. The same Parts of the Victim were burnt on the Altar, in *this*, as in the former Sacrifice. The rest

(if the Sacrifice was offer'd for the Sin of the *High-Priest*, or for the *People*) was carry'd without the Camp, and there burnt; but, if it was for a *private* Person, the Victim was divided (as was said before) between the Priest, and the *Offerer*. 4. The *Sacrifice of Oblation* was either fine Flour, or Incense, Cakes of fine Flour, and Oil bak'd, or the first Fruits of new Corn: Oil, Salt, Wine, and Frankincense went always along with every Thing that was offer'd. All the Frankincense was cast into the Fire; but of the other Things the Priest only burnt a Part, and the rest he reserv'd to himself.

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb xviii.

THUS we have taken a cursory View of the *Jewish* Tabernacle, and its Utensils; of the *Jewish* Priesthood, and its Offices; and have nothing more to do, but to enquire a little for what * Ends and Uses God was pleas'd to institute these Things. To this Purpose, St Paul informs us, that the *Jewish* Law was an imperfect Dispensation from the very first, and (d) *added only because of Transgressions, until the Seed should come, to whom the Promise was made*: That, in great Condescension, it was adapted to the Weakness of the *Jewish* People, whom he compares to an Heir under a Tutor or Governor; for these are his Words: (e) *I say then, that an Heir, as long as he is a Child, differeth nothing from a Servant, tho' he be Lord of all: Even so we, when we were Children,*

were

* Josephus, having treated of the Tabernacle, and the several Things appertaining to it, makes the Use and Design of them a little too *mystical* and *allegorical*. "Let but a Man consider, says he, the Structure of the Tabernacle, the sacerdotal Vestments, and the holy Vessels, that are dedicated to the Service of the Altar, and he must of Necessity be convinc'd, that our *Law-giver* was a pious Man. — For what are all these but the Image of the *whole World*? The *Tabernacle*, consisting of thirty Cubits, and being divided into *three Parts*, whereof two are for the Priests in general and of free Access, resembles the *Earth* and the *Sea*; while the *third*, where no Mortal (except the *High Priest*) is permitted to enter, is an Emblem of *Heaven*, reserv'd for God alone. The *twelve Loaves of Shew-Bread*, upon the Table, signify the *twelve Months* in the Year. The *Candlestick*, which is made up of seventy Pieces, refers to the twelve Signs of the *Zodiack*, through which the seven *Planets* take their Course; and the seven *Lamps*, on the Top of the seven Branches, bear an Analogy to the *Planets* themselves. The *Curtains*, with the *four Colours* that are wrought in them, represent the *four Elements*. — By the *High-Priest's Linnen Garment* is design'd the whole Body of the *Earth*; and, by the Violet Colour, the *Heavens*. The *Pomegranates* answer to *Lightning*; and the Noise of the *Bells*, to *Thunder*. The *four-coloured Ephod* bears a Resemblance to the very Nature of the *Universe*, and the interweaving it with *Threads of Gold*, to the *Rays of the Sun*, which give us *Light*. The *Peitoral*, or *Rational*, in the middle of it, intimates the Position of the *Earth* in the Centre of the World; the *Girdle*, about the Priest's Body, is the *Sea* about the *Globe* of the *Earth*; the two *Sardonyx Stones*, on the Shoulders, represent the *Sun* and *Moon*; and, by the *twelve* other Stones on the Breast, may be understood either the *twelve Months*, or the *twelve Signs* in the *Zodiack*." But all this is too light, and fanciful, one would think, for so grave an Author, as Josephus, had not this Way of *allegorizing* Things been the prevailing Custom of the Age. *Jewish Antiq.* Lib. iii. c. 7.

(d) Gal. iii. 19.

(e) Ibid. iv. 1, &c.

A. M.
2514, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1490, &c.

were in Bondage, under the Elements of the World; so that (f) the Law was our School-master, to bring us unto Christ, and, (g) having only a Shadow of good Things to come, and not the very Image of the Things, it could never, with those Sacrifices, which were offered, Year by Year continually, make the Comers thereunto perfect. In order therefore to illustrate this Point, viz. that the Jewish Religion was, in a great Measure, intended to typify and prefigure the more perfect Dispensation of the Gospel, we shall instance in some of its Particulars already enumerated.

Christ, and his
Transactions,
typified in the
Tabernacle,
and its Uten-
sils.

Thus the Tabernacle itself was a Type of our Redeemer dwelling in our Nature; for so St John tells us, that (h) the Word was made Flesh, and ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, dwelt among us, as in a Tabernacle. The Altar of Burnt-Offerings in the Court pointed out the Death and Sacrifice (i) of our Lord, by the shedding of whose Blood our Sins are pardon'd, and we receiv'd into Mercy and Favour. The Altar of Incense within the Holy Place denoted our Lord's powerful Intercession for us, in his exalted State of Glory; and the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies was an eminent Emblem of him, from whose Mouth we receiv'd a Law, founded upon better Promises; by whose Intercession we have Access to the Throne of Grace with all Boldness; and whose Satisfaction to the divine Justice is our true Propitiatory, or Mercy-Seat.

What a manifest Type the Jewish High-Priest was of our Lord and Saviour, the Author to the Hebrews has declar'd in more Instances than one. The Jewish High-Priest was the only Man, who was permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies; and (k) we have such an High-Priest, says the Apostle, who is set on the Right-Hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens, a Minister of the Sanctuary, and of the true Tabernacle, which the Lord pitch-

ed, and not Man. The Jewish High-Priest offer'd a solemn Expiatory Sacrifice once a Year; our Lord (l) appeared once in the End of the World to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself. After the expiatory Sacrifice, the Jewish High-Priest went into the Holy Place, there to offer Incense on the golden Altar; our Lord, when he had purged our Sins, (m) sat down on the Right-Hand of the Majesty on high, there (n) to appear in the Presence of God, and, by the Incense of his Merits, to make continual Intercession for us.

From Exod.
xxxiv. 28. to
Numb. xviii.

In like Manner, whether we consider the several Qualifications of the Sacrifices under the Law, or the several Sorts of them, we shall find them to be Types, and Prefigurations of Christ. The Conditions of a Jewish Sacrifice were, — That it shou'd be without Blemish, publicly presented before the Congregation, substituted in the Sinner's Room, and the Iniquities of the Sinner laid upon him. With Relation to these Properties, our Saviour is said to be holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from Sinners. That he might sanctify his People, he is said to have (o) suffered without the Gate, bearing our Reproach; and that (p) he, who knew no Sin, became Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.

And in the se-
veral Sacrifi-
ces, which
were offered.

And so, if we look to the several Sorts of Sacrifices appointed under the Law, we shall soon perceive that these equally lead us to Christ. For he was the Trespass-Offering, in that he was made Sin for us; the Peace-Offering, because (q) he made Peace by the Blood of his Cross; the Meat and Drink-Offering, for (r) his Flesh is Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed; the Scape-Goat, for he hath carry'd away our Sins, (s) never to be more remem-ber'd against us; the Paschal Lamb, for (t) Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us; the great Sacrifice of Atonement, for (u) Jesus Christ the Righteous, is both our Advocate

(f) Gal. iii. 24.

(g) Heb. x. 1.

(h) John i. 14.

(i) Heb. xiii. 10.

(k) Ibid. viii.

1, 2.

(l) Ibid. ix. 26.

(m) Ibid. i. 3.

(n) Ibid. 9—24.

(o) Ibid. xiii. 12, 13.

(p) 2 Cor. v. 21.

(q) Col. i. 20.

(r) John vi. 55.

(s) Ibid. i. 29.

(t) 1 Cor. v. 7.

(u) 1 John ii. 1, 2.

A. M. *Advocate with the Father, and a Propi-*
 2514, &c. *tiation for our Sins: And, in fine, (x) his*
 Ant. Christ. *Blood, who, thro' the Eternal Spirit offered*
 1490, &c. *himself to God, without Spot, is more ef-*
fectual, than the Blood of Bulls and Goats,
to purge our Consciences from dead Works,
to serve the living God.

*The Change of
 the Jewish Re-
 ligion con-
 sistent with
 God's Attri-
 butes.*

THUS it appears, that the chief End of the several Institutions, relating to the ceremonial Part of the Jewish Worship, was to prefigure the Person, and Transactions of our blessed Saviour, (y) *when the Fullness of Time was come, that God should send forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem those, that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons.* And therefore, since the Ceremonies of the Jewish Law cou'd never be of any Esteem in the Sight of God, any otherwise, than as they promoted this End, and prepar'd Men's Minds for the Reception of a more perfect Institution of Religion; it is manifest, that, when this more perfect Institution was once settled, the former, and more imperfect was, of Course, to cease; (z) *there being necessarily a disannulling of the Commandment going before, for the Weakness and Unprofitableness thereof.*

AND from hence we may, finally, infer, that, tho' the *Essence* of Religion be eternally and immutably the same, yet the Form and Institution of it may be, and often has been, chang'd. (a) The *Essence* of all Religion is *Obedience* to that moral and eternal Law, which obliges us to imitate the Life of God in Justice, Mercy, and Holiness, *i. e. to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World.* This is the Sum of all natural Religion, as appears from the Discourses of those wiser Heathens, who were free from Prejudice, and Superstition. This was the Sum of the Jewish Religion, as appears

from the frequent and earnest Protestations of God to that People by his Servants the Prophets: And this likewise is the Sum of the Christian Religion, as the Apostles every where inculcate. But, though Religion itself is thus immutably the same, yet the Form and Institution of it may be different.

WHEN Natural Religion, by Reason of its Obscurity, in this corrupt Estate of human Nature, prov'd ineffectual to make Men truly religious, God left them no longer to the Guidance of their Reason only, but gave them first the Patriarchal, and afterwards the Mosaick Dispensation; and when (through the Incumbrance with so many ritual Observances) this latter prov'd ineffectual to the same great End, God abolish'd this Form of Religion likewise, and instituted the Christian. In all which Proceeding, there is no Reflection at all upon the immutable Nature of God. For, as the Divine Nature is, in the truest and highest Sense, *unchangeable*; so Religion itself, in its Nature and Essence, is likewise *unchangeable*: But, as the Capacities, the Prejudices, and the Circumstances of Men are different, so the Institution, and outward Form of that Religion (which in its *Essence* is always the same) may, with the good Pleasure of God, be chang'd; even as a careful Nurse (to use a Scripture Comparison upon this Occasion) adapts the Diet to the Strength and Constitution of the Person she attends: *For every one, that useth Milk* (as the Elements of the Jewish Dispensation were) *is unskilful in the Word of Righteousness, for he is a Babe; but strong Meat* (or a Religion of greater Perfection, as the Christian is) *belongeth to them, that are of full Age; even those, who, by Reason of Use, have their Senses exercised to discern both Good and Evil.*

From Exod. xxxiv. 28. to Numb. xviii.

(x) Heb. ix. 13, 14.
 Vol. X.

(y) Gal. iv. 4, 5.

(z) Heb. vii. 18.

(a) Dr Samuel Clarke's Sermon

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.

From Numb.
xviii. to the
End of Deute-
ronomy.

C H A P. III.

*From the Death of K O R A H, to the I S R A E L I T E S Entrance into
C A N A A N. In all 38 Years.*

The H I S T O R Y.

*The Israelites
sojourning in
the Wilderness.*

AFTER the Establishment of the High-Priest's Office in Aaron, and his Family, the *Israelites* mov'd about, from Place to Place, in the Desarts of *Arabia*, but chiefly about the Mountains of *Idumæa*, until God, * by shortening the Period of human Life, had taken away almost all that Generation, (a) of whom he had sworn in his Wrath (as the Psalmist expresses it) that they should not enter into his Rest. And indeed good Reason had he to be angry with them, since, during the Remainder of their Peregrination, they were guilty of many more Murmurs, and Idolatries, than *Moses* has thought proper to record, which are nevertheless mention'd, with no small Severity, (b) by other inspir'd Writers.

As the Time however for their Entrance into the *Holy Land* now drew near, from *Ezion Geber* they advanc'd towards *Kadesh* in the Wilderness of *Sin*, designing very probably to enter the Country through those narrow Passages, which, at that Time, were call'd *the Ways of the Spies*; but (c) they were repuls'd by the King of *Arad*, who coming out against them with a strong Force, slew a considerable Number, and took from them much Booty. In their second Attempt however they succeeded better; for they defeated the King's Army, sack'd some of his Towns, and vowing at another Opportunity († which happen'd in the Time of (d) *Joshua*) the utter Destruction of the whole Nation; they took their Rout for the

*And engaging
with the King
of Arad.*

* After the many Judgments and Calamities sent upon *Israel*, by Reason of their Rebellions against God, *Moses*, perceiving the divine Threatnings to be daily accomplish'd, by the frequent Deaths of those who came out of *Egypt*, and whose Carcasses were to fall in the Wilderness, compos'd the Ninetieth Psalm, wherein he mentions the Reduction of human Life to the Term of Years, wherein it has ever since stopp'd, and makes several wholesome Reflections thereupon: *The Days of our Age are threescore Years and ten; and though Men be so strong, that they come to fourscore Years, yet is their Strength then but Labour and Sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone. O, teach us therefore to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom!* Ver. 10, 12.

(a) Psal. xcv. 11.

(b) Vid. Amos v. 26. Ezek. & Psal. passim, Acts vii. 43.

(c) Numb. xxi. 1, 11.

† The *Yerous* have a Tradition, founded on an express Text in *Deuteronomy* (Chap. xx. 10, &c.) that the *Israelites* were oblig'd to send an Herald to offer Peace in their Name, to every City and People, before they attempted to conquer them by the Sword; that, in Case they accepted it, they only became *Tributaries* to them; but, if they refus'd their Offer, they were then to be vow'd to Destruction. *Maimonides* has taken great Pains to prove that all those Nations, which were cut off by the *Israelites*, ow'd their Destruction to their chusing to try the Fortune of War, rather than accept of Peace upon such Terms. There is one Objection however, that seems to stand a little in his Way, and that is, ——— the Stratagem, which the *Gibeonites* made use of to obtain Peace from *Israel*, which wou'd have been needless, had the latter been oblig'd to offer it, before they began any Hostilities: But to this the learned *Rabbi* answers ——— that the Reason of the *Gibeonites* Policy was, that they had, in common with their Neighbours, refus'd the first offer of Peace, and were consequently doom'd to the same Fate with them; and that, for the Prevention of this, their Ambassadors feign'd themselves to come from a Country vastly distant from any of the other seven, and by that Means obtain'd the desir'd Peace. *Maimon. ap. Cunæus, & Basnag. Rep. Heb. Tom. 1. Lib. 2. c. 20.*

(d) Josh. xii. 14.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
The Death of
Miriam, Mo-
ses's Offence,
and Aaron's
Death.

the present another Way, and so arriv'd again at *Kadesh*.

HERE it was, that *Miriam*, the Sister of *Moses* and *Aaron* (* who was older than either of them) in the hundred and thirty-third Year of her Age dy'd, was bury'd with great Pomp, and by the *Israelites* lamented for the Space of a whole Month. Here it was, that the People fell again into their old Way of murmuring for Want of Water, which God order'd *Moses* to supply, by speaking *only* to a certain Rock; but, some Way or other, he deviating from his Instructions, either through Impatience, or Diffidence, offended God to such a Degree, as to deserve a Denunciation, that neither he, nor his Brother *Aaron* (who seems to have been equally in the Offence) shou'd be permitted to enter into *Canaan*. Hence likewise it was, that *Moses* sent an Embassy to the King of *Edom*, desiring a free Passage through his Country, and promising to commit no Hostilities, nor give the

least Molestation to any of his Subjects. But the haughty *Edomite* was so far from granting his Request, that he came out with a strong Army to oppose him; which *Moses*, no doubt, wou'd have resented as the Thing deserv'd, had not God (whom he consulted upon this Occasion) order'd him, for the present, not to engage with the *Edomites*: So that, decamping from *Kadesh*, he came to Mount *Hor*, not far from the Borders of *Edom*, where God gave *Aaron* Notice of his approaching Death, and, not long after, commanded *Moses* to take him, and *Eleazar* his Son, (who was to succeed him in the Office of the High-Priest) to the Top of the Mount, and there to strip *Aaron* of his sacerdotal Robes, and put them upon his Son; which when *Moses* had done, *Aaron* || died on the Top of Mount *Hor*, being an hundred and twenty three Years old; and when the People understood that he was dead, * they bewail'd him *thirty Days*.

From Numb. xviii. to the End of Deuteronomy.

As

* *Miriam* was older than either *Aaron* or *Moses*. *Moses* was the youngest: And, when he was born, she might probably be about twelve Years of Age, because, when he was expos'd upon the Banks of the River *Nile*, she, we find, had Address enough to offer her Service to *Pharaoh's* Daughter to go and fetch her a Nurse, which can hardly be suppos'd of one younger. Some of the antient Fathers are of Opinion, that she dy'd a *Virgin*, and was the *Legislatrix*, or Governess of the *Jewish* Women, as *Moses* was of the Men; but the more probable Opinion is, that she was marry'd to *Hur*, a Man of chief Note in the Tribe of *Judah*, and on several Occasions a Person of great Confidence with *Moses*; but it does not appear that she had any Children by him. She was bury'd, as *Josephus* tells us, with great Solemnity, at the Charge of the *Publick*, and her Sepulchre (as *Eusebius* reports) was extant in his Time at *Kadesh*, not far distant from the City *Petra*, the Metropolis of *Arabia Petraea*. Universal History, Lib. i. c. 7. and *Calmet's* Dictionary.

|| The Mount *Hor* was on the Coast of the Land of *Edom* towards the *East*, in some Part of that Tract, which was afterwards denoted by the Mount *Seir*. In *Deuteronomy* ii. 12. we are told expressly, that the *Horims* dwelt in *Seir* before-time, and accordingly we read, *Gen.* xiv. 6. that *Chedorlaomer*, King of *Elam*, with his Confederates, smote the *Horites* in their Mount *Seir*. Now it seems very probable, that, as Places, at first, were wont to take their Names from their *Inhabitants*, both this Place, and the People might derive their Names from one *Hor*, whom they descended from, and who, in the early Ages of the World, inhabited this Country; and that tho', in Process of Time, the Name of Mount *Seir* came to be us'd to denote the same Tract, yet the old Name of Mount *Hor* was preserv'd in that Part of it, where stood the Mountain here so call'd by *Moses*, and on which *Aaron* dy'd. There seems to be however no small Difficulty in reconciling this Passage in *Numbers* xx. 23—28. with what we read in *Deut.* x. 6. That the Children of *Israel* took their Journey from *Beeroth*, of the Children of *Jaakan*, to *Mosera*: There *Aaron* died, and there he was buried. So that *Moses* seems to have forgot himself, when, in one Place, he tells us, that his Brother *Aaron* was bury'd on Mount *Hor*, and in another in *Mosera*. To reconcile this, some have suppos'd, that Mount *Hor* was so near to *Mosera*, where the *Israelites* had their Encampment when *Aaron* dy'd, that either Place might, with Propriety enough, be call'd the Place of his Death, and his Interment. It seems however, from the Account, which we have of their Encampments in *Numb.* xxxiii. very plain, that Mount *Hor* and *Mosera* were two distinct Places; and therefore others have maintain'd, that the sixth and seventh Verses in the tenth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, in the common *Hebrew* Text, have been extremely corrupted by the Ignorance of some Transcribers, because the *Hebrew Samaritan*, or old *Hebrew* Text, makes the Account, in *Deut.* x. 6, 7. exactly agree with the Order of the Encampments, mention'd in *Numb.* xxxiii. 32, 38. and there is said, that, *Aaron* dy'd, and was bury'd in Mount *Hor*. *Wells's* Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. II.

* The Author of *Ecclesiasticus*, having given us a long Commendation of *Aaron*, and his Vestments, comes, at last, to tell us, that "God chose him out of all Men living, to offer Sacrifices to the Lord, Incense, and sweet

"Savour,

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
The Brazen
Serpent set up.

As soon as the Days of Mourning were over, they remov'd, and encamp'd at *Zalmanab*, which took its Name from the Image of the *Serpent*, which *Moses* caus'd to be set up there. For the *Israelites*, being tir'd with the Length of their Journey, the Narrowness of their Passes, and the Barrenness of the Country, began to relapse into their old Humour of murmuring and repining, which provok'd God to send great * Swarms of fiery Serpents among them; but, after the Death of several, and upon the Humiliation of the rest, he commanded *Moses* to cast a * brazen Serpent, of the same Size and Figure with those, that infested them, and to fix

it upon a Pole, situate on some eminent Ground, that as many, as were bitten by the *living* Serpents, might look up to the *brazen* one, and be heal'd. Which accordingly was done, and had its intended miraculous Effect.

From Numb. xviii. to the End of Deuteronomy.

SEVERAL were the Marches and Encampments, which the *Israelites*, without committing the least Hostilities, made between the Countries of *Moab* and *Ammon*, till they came, at length, to the Country of the *Amorites*. And from hence *Moses* || sent Ambassadors to *Sihon* their King, demanding a Passage through his Country, and offering to pay for all Manner of Necessaries, without giving him the least Disturbance.

The Israelites overcome Sihon and Og, and seize on their Country.

“Savour, for a Memorial, and to make Reconciliation for his People; that he gave unto him the Commandments, and Authority in the Statutes of Judgments, that he shou'd teach *Jacob* the Testimonies, and inform *Israel* in the Laws; that Strangers conspir'd together against him, and maligned him in the Wilderness — this the Lord saw, and it displeas'd him, and, in his wrathful Indignation, they were consum'd: — But he made *Aaron* more honourable, and gave him an Heritage, and divided unto him the first Fruits of the Increase; so that he did eat the Sacrifices of the Lord, which he gave unto him and to his Seed, &c.” He dy'd in the Arms of *Moses* his Brother, and *Eleazer* his Son, and Successor in the High-Priesthood. They bury'd him in some Cave belonging to Mount *Hor*, and kept the Place of his Interment from the Knowledge of the *Israelites*, perhaps from an Apprehension, that, in After-Ages, they might pay some superstitious Worship to him; or, rather, that the *Arabians*, among whom they then dwelt, might not, at any Time, take it in their Heads to violate the Sanctity of his Grave, *Eccles. xlv. 13, &c.*

* Some Authors are of Opinion, that these Serpents were only little Worms, which bred in the Skin, and were of so venomous a Nature, that they immediately poison'd those, who were infested among them. But it is very evident, that not only the original Words, *Necaschim Seraphim*, signify a burning or winged Serpent, but that these Creatures are very common both in *Egypt* and *Arabia*, infomuch that there wou'd be no living in those Countries, if these Serpents had not by Providence been debarr'd from multiplying, as other Serpents do. For the *Arabians* tell us, that, after they have coupled together, the Female never fails to kill the Male, and that her young Ones kill her, as soon as they are hatch'd. *Herodotus*, who had seen several of these Serpents, tells us, that they very much resemble those, which the *Greeks* and *Latins* call *Hydrae*; and *Bochart* has quoted a great Number both of antient and modern Authors to prove, that they really are the *Hydrae*. They are but short, are spotted with divers Colours, and have Wings like those of a Bat. The *Ibis* is their mortal Enemy: And *Herodotus* tells us, that, at *Buto* in *Egypt*, he had seen a vast Quantity of their *Skeletons*, whose Flesh these Birds had devour'd. They love sweet Smells, frequent such Trees as bear Spices, and the Marshes, where the *aromatick* Reed (or *Cassia*) grows; and therefore, when the *Arabians* go to gather the *Cassia*, they clothe themselves with Skins, and cover all their Heads over, except their Eyes, because their biting is very dangerous. *Bochart, de Animal. sacr. Part. II. Lib. 3. c. 13.*

* This brazen Serpent continu'd among the *Jews* above seven hundred Years, even to the Time of *Hezekiah*, King of *Judah*; but, when it came to be made an Object of Idolatry, and the People, for some Time, had paid their Incense and Adoration to it, that pious Prince caus'd it to be broken in Pieces; and, by way of Contempt, call'd it *Nebushtan*, that is to say, a brazen Bauble or Trifle. At *Milan* however, in the Church of *St Ambrose*, they pretend to shew you a Serpent made of Brass, which they tell you is the same with that of *Moses*. But every one may believe of this as he pleases. *Calmer's Dictionary*, under the Word *Serpent*.

|| It may here be propos'd as a Difficulty, how *Moses* came to offer the *Amorites* Terms of Peace, considering that the *Israelites* were commanded to destroy them, and to take Possession of their Country. But to this it has been answer'd by some learned Men, that, notwithstanding God had expressly doom'd this People to an Extermination, yet *Moses* thought himself at Liberty to indulge his usual Meekness, and to begin with gentle and amicable Measures, though he might at the same Time be persuaded, that they wou'd avail nothing; and this probably at the Suggestion of God himself, to cut off all Occasions or Pretence of Complaint from the *Amorites*, as if they had not been honourably and fairly dealt with, and that the Equity and Righteousness of God's Proceeding with a Prince of so savage and obdurate a Temper might appear in a stronger Light, when the Consequence of his refusing a free Passage to the *Israelites*, and bringing his Army into the Field against them, shou'd happen to be his own Defeat and Destruction.

Bibliotheca Bibl. on Numb. xxi. 21.



*To the Right Reverend Father in
LINCOLN this Plate is most
most Dutifull Son & Servant*



*God RICHARD Lord Bishop of
humbly Inscr'd to his Lordsh^{ps}
Tho^s Stackhouse .*

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.

Disturbance. But † the *Amorite* Prince, not thinking it safe to receive so numerous a People into the Heart of his Kingdom, not only deny'd them a Passage, but accounting it better Policy to attack, than to be attack'd, gather'd what Forces he could together, and march'd out to give them Battle. But not far from *Jabaz*, where the Engagement was, the *Israelites* overthrew him; and, having made themselves Masters of his Country, put all, both Man, Woman, and Child, to the Sword; And not long after this, *Og* †, King of *Bashan*, † a Man of a prodigious gigantick Size, attempting to obstruct their Passage, underwent the same Fate. For they seiz'd his Country, and utterly destroy'd the Inhabitants thereof, reserving only the Cattle, and Spoil of the Cities, as a Prey to themselves, as they had done before in the Case of *Sihon*,

ENCOURAG'D by these Successes, the

Upon their entering the Borders of Moab, Balak sends for Balaam.

Israelites march'd to the Plains of *Moab*, and encamp'd on the Banks of the River *Jordan*, opposite to *Jericho*. This put *Balak* (who was then King of *Moab*) into a terrible Consternation: For, supposing himself not able to engage the mighty Force of *Israel*, he had not only made a strong Alliance with the *Midianites* and *Ammonites*, his Neighbours, in order to stop their Progress, but thought it advisable likewise, before he began any Hostilities against them, to try how far the Power of *Balaam's* Enchantments (a noted Magician in *Pethor*, a City of *Mesopotamia*) might go, in turning the Fortune of the War towards his Side.

To this Purpose he dispatch'd a select Number of his *Nobles*, with costly Presents to || *Balaam*, intreating him in the King's Name to come, and curse him a People, who were arriv'd upon the Borders of his Territories; but God, for that Time, would

From Numb. xviii. to the End of Deuteronomy.

† *Grotius* (in his second Book *de Jure Belli & Pacis*, Cap. 2. Sect. 13.) is of Opinion, that, according to the Law of Nations, the Highways, Seas, and Rivers of every Country ought to be free to all Passengers, upon just Occasions. He produces several Examples from *Heathen* History of such Permission being granted to Armies, and thence he infers, that *Sihon* and *Og*, denying the *Israelites* this Privilege, gave a just Ground of War; nor does he think, that the Fear, which these Princes might conceive, is any Excuse at all for not granting the Thing, because *no Man's Fear can take away another Man's Right*, especially, when several Ways might have been found out to have made their Passage safe on both Sides. But, when all is said, it seems not clear, that all Men have such a Right as this great Man thinks they may claim. No Man, we know, can challenge a Passage through a private Man's Ground without his Leave; and every Prince has the same Dominion in all his Territories, that a private Man has in his Land. As for the Examples therefore of those, who had permitted Armies to pass through their Kingdoms, they are Examples of *Fact*, rather than of *Right*, and of such as were not in a Condition to refuse what was demanded of them. For the Thing is notorious, that several Countries have suffer'd very grievously by granting this Liberty; and therefore no Prince, who consults his Subjects Safety, is to be blam'd for not granting it; nor was the War with the *Amorites* founded upon this Reason, as we shall see hereafter. *Patrick's* Commentary.

† The Land of *Bashan* was one of the most fertile Cantons of *Canaan*, which reach'd on the East to the River *Jordan*, on the West to the Mountains of *Gilead*, on the South to the Brook *Jabbock*, and on the North to the Land of *Geshur*. The whole Kingdom took its Name from the Hill of *Bashan*, which is situate in it, and has since been call'd *Butanaea*. It had no less than sixty wall'd Towns in it, besides Villages. It afforded an excellent Breed of Cattle, and stately Oaks, and was, in short, a plentiful and populous Country. *Universal History*, Lib. 1. c. 7.

† The Description of this gigantick King, who was the last of the Race of the *Rephaims*, or vast prodigious Men, we have in *Deuteronomy* iii. 11. and from the Size of his Bed (which was preserv'd a long Time in the City of *Rabbal*, the Capital of the *Ammonites*) we may guess at his Stature. It was nine Cubits long, and four Cubits broad, i. e. fifteen Feet four Inches and a half long, and six Feet ten Inches broad. But the *Jewish* Doctors, not content with such *Pigmy* Wonders, have improv'd the Story to their own liking. For they tell us, that this Bed of nine Cubits cou'd be no more than his Cradle, since himself was six Score Cubits high, when full-grown; that he liv'd before the Flood, and that the Waters of it, when at the highest, reach'd only up to his Knees; that however he thought proper to get upon the Top of the Roof of the Ark, where *Noah* supply'd him with Provision, not out of any Compassion to him, but that the Men, who came after the *Deluge*, might see, how great the Power of God was, who had destroy'd such Monsters from the Face of the Earth. *Calmet* and *Munster* in *Deut.* Chap. iii.

|| In *Pet.* chap. ii. ver. 15. *Balaam* is said to be the Son of *Bosor*, according to our Version; but as the Words, *the Son*, are not found in the Original, but were insert'd by the Translators, to supply the Sense, as they imagin'd;

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would not permit him to go: Whereupon *Balak*, supposing either that the Number and Quality of his Messengers did not answer *Balaam's* Ambition, or the Value of the Presents his Covetousness, sent Messengers, of a more honourable Rank with larger Proposals, and Promises of high Promotion, if he would but gratify him in this one Thing.

*Balaam's
Journey, and
Behaviour
when he ar-
riv'd.*

(e) *BALAAM* loved the Wages of Unrighteousness; and therefore blinded with this Passion, he address'd God for Leave to go; which God in his Anger granted, but under such Restrictions, as would necessarily hinder all his *Fascinations* from doing the *Israelites* any Harm.

WITH this Permission he set forward with the Princes of *Moab*; but as he was on the Road, an Angel met him, whom (tho' he perceiv'd him not) his Ass plainly saw, and therefore turn'd aside into the Field to avoid him. With much ado, *Balaam* beat his Ass into the Road again; but when the Angel stood in a narrow Passage between two Walls, which inclos'd a Vineyard, the Ass for Fear ran against one of the Walls, and crush'd *Balaam's* Leg, which provok'd him so, that he beat him again. At last, the Angel remov'd, and stood in a Place so very narrow, that there was no Possibility of getting by him, whereupon the Ass fell down under his Rider, and would go no farther. This enrag'd the Prophet still more; and, as he was beating and belabouring the poor Creature most unmercifully, God was

pleas'd to give the Ass the Faculty of Speech, wherein he expostulated the hard Usage he had met with; and, as *Balaam* was going to justify himself, he was likewise pleas'd to open the Prophet's Eyes, and let him see the Angel standing in the Way with a naked Sword in his Hand, which so terrify'd him, that he fell down upon his Face, ask'd Pardon for his Trespas, and offer'd to return home again, if so be his Journey was displeasing to God.

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ronomy.

THAT his Journey was displeasing to God himself, he could not be ignorant, because, in his first Address, God had expressly interdicted his going. Being resolv'd however, out of the Man's wicked Inclination, to raise some Kind of Advantage, and to make him, who was hir'd to curse, the Instrument of pronouncing a Blessing upon his People, God gave him now free Leave to proceed. When *Balak* understood that *Balaam* was on the Road, himself went to receive him upon the Confines of his Dominions; and having, in a friendly Manner, blam'd him for not coming at his first sending, which *Balaam* excus'd upon Account of the *Restraint*, which God had laid on him, he conducted him to his capital City, and there entertain'd him publickly, with his Princes and Nobles that Day; and the next Morning, carry'd him to the high Places consecrated to * *Baal*, that from thence he might take a View of the Extremity of the *Israelitish* Camp. Whilst they were here, the Prophet order'd † seven Altars to be erected,

imagin'd; the Word *Bosor* may denote a Place, as well as a Person, and accordingly, *Grotius* understands St *Peter's* Words, not as if *Bosor* was the Father, but the City of *Balaam*: For what was anciently call'd *Peithor*, the Syrians, in After-Ages, call'd *Bosor*, by an easy Change of two Letters, which is a Thing not unusual. Universal History, Lib. 1. c. 7.

(e) 2 Pet. ii. 15.

* The Word *Baal* signifies Lord, and was the Name of several Gods, both Male and Female, as *Selden* (*de Diis Syris*, c. 1.) shews. The God of the *Moabites* was *Chemosh*, but here very probably is call'd by the common Name of *Baal*: And, as all Nations worshipp'd their Gods upon high Places, so this God of *Moab*, having more Places of Worship than one, *Balak* carry'd *Balaam* to them all, that from thence he might take the most advantageous Prospect of the *Israelites*. These high Places were full of Trees, and shady Groves, which made them commodious both for the solemn Thoughts, and Prayers of such as were devout, and for the filthy Inclinations and abominable Practices of such as affect'd to be wicked. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† According to the Account, which both *Josephus* and *Servius* give us of antient Times, the Heathens sacrific'd to the Cœlestial Gods only upon Altars: To the Terrestrial, they sacrific'd upon the Earth; and to the Infernal, in Holes digg'd in the Earth. And tho' the Number seven was much observ'd among the *Hebrews*, even by God's own Appointment, *Levit.* iv. 6. yet we do not read of more than one Altar built by the *Patriarchs*, when they offer'd their

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erected, and seven Oxen, and seven Rams to be got ready; and having * offer'd an Ox and a Ram on each Altar, he left *Balak* to stand by the Sacrifices, while himself withdrew to consult the Lord; and, upon his Return, acquainted the King, "How impossible it was for him to do the Thing, that he might expect from him, *viz.* the cursing a People who were so signally under the Protection of Heaven; and so magnifying their Prosperity and Increase, he concludes with a Wish, that his Fate might be theirs, both in Life and Death."

BALAK, at these Words, express'd no small Surprise; but still not discourag'd he hop'd that the Change of the Place might possibly produce some better Luck: And therefore taking *Balaam* to the Top of Mount *Pisgab*, he try'd whether he might not be permitted to curse them from thence. But all in vain. The same Number of Altars were erected, the Bullocks and Rams were offer'd, and the Prophet withdrew to consult God, as before; but still he return'd with no better News: For the Purport of his Declaration was, "That God was fix'd and immutable in his Favour to the *Israelites*; that he would not suffer any bloody Designs, or any Frauds, or Inchantments to prevail

"against them, but would finally make them victorious, wherever they came."

THIS was so great a Mortification to *Balak*, that, to silence *Balaam*, he forbid him either to curse or bless; but he soon chang'd his Mind, and desir'd him to make a farther Trial at another Place. Accordingly, another Place was made Choice of. Fresh Altars were rais'd, and fresh Sacrifices offer'd, but all to no Purpose: *Balaam*, perceiving that God was resolv'd to continue blessing *Israel*, without retiring, as aforesometimes, under Pretence of consulting God, at the first Cast of his Eye upon the Tents of the *Israelites*, brake out into Ejaculations of Praise; and then, in proper and significant *Metaphors*, foretold their Extent, Fertility, and Strength, and that *those that blessed them, should be blessed, and those that cursed them should be cursed.*

By this Time *Balak*, enrag'd to hear *Balaam*, whom he had sent for to curse the Children of *Israel*, thus three Times *successively* bless them, could no longer contain himself, but smiting his Hands together, he bad him haste, and be gone, since, by his foolish Adherence to God's Suggestions, he had both abus'd him, and defrauded himself. * *Balaam* had Recourse to his old Excuse, of not daring to transcend the

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His Prophecies concerning the *Israelites*.

their Sacrifices, nor were any more than one allow'd by *Moses*: And therefore we may well suppose, that there was something of heathen Superstition in this Erection of seven Altars, and that the *Moabites*, in their Worship of the Sun, (who is here principally meant by *Baal*) did at the same Time sacrifice to the seven Planets. This was originally a Part of the *Egyptian* Theology; for as they worshipp'd at this Time the Lights of Heaven, so they first imagin'd the seven Days of the Week to be under the respective Influence of these seven Luminaries. *Belus*, and his *Egyptian* Priests, having obtain'd leave to settle in *Babylon*, about half a Century before this Time, might teach the *Chaldeans* their Astronomy, and so introduc'd this *Egyptian* Notion of the Influence of the seven ruling Stars, which *Balaam*, being no Stranger to the Learning of the Age and Country he liv'd in, might pretend to *Balak* to proceed upon in his Divinations and Auguries. *Le Clerc's* Commentary in Locum, and *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. III. Lib. xii.

* In the Text it is said, that *Balak* and *Balaam* offered on every Altar a Bullock and a Ram, Numb. xxiii. 2. But, though it was customary, in those early Days, for Kings to officiate as Priests, yet it is rather to be suppos'd, that *Balak* only presented the Sacrifices, and that *Balaam* perform'd the Office of sacrificing them; but then it may be made a Question, to whom the Sacrifices were offer'd. And to this it may be answer'd, that they might Both have a different Intention; that *Balak* might supplicate *Baal*, while *Balaam* was making his Addresses to the Lord, tho', with such superstitious Ceremonies, as, it is likely, were us'd by the Worshipers of *Baal*. Or why may not we suppose, that *Balaam*, telling *Balak*, that he cou'd effect nothing without the Lord, the God of *Israel*, persuaded him to join with him at that Time in his Worship, that they might more powerfully prevail with him to withdraw his Presence from the *Israelites*? For there is no Reason to imagine, that *Balaam* wou'd go to enquire of the Lord, immediately after he had sacrific'd to other Gods. *Patrick's* Commentary.

* *Josephus* brings in *Balaam* making his Apology for himself, in order to pacify *Balak's* Rage, for his having bless'd the *Israelites*, instead of cursing them. "And does King *Balak* think, that, where Prophets are upon the Subject of Fatalities, or Things to come, they are left to their own Liberty, what to say, and what not, or to

"make

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the divine Commands ; but, being willing to gratify the King, and, in Compliance to his covetous Temper, to gain some Reward to himself, he offer'd to *advertise* him of what the *Israelites* would do to his People in subsequent Ages ; but still, (against his own Inclination) he bestow'd Blessings on *Israel*, and prophesy'd, " That " a *Star* should come forth from *Jacob*, " and a *Rod* from *Israel* ; that it should " smite the *Chiefs* of *Moab*, and destroy " the *Children* of *Seth* ; that *Edom* should " fall under its Power ; and that the " *Amalekites* and *Kenites* should be extir- " pated : In fine, that the *western* Nations, " the *Greeks* and *Romans*, should vanquish " the *Assyrians*, destroy the *Hebrews*, and " perish themselves."

The *Israelites*
commit *Whore-*
dom and *Ido-*
latry with
strange Wo-
men, and are
punish'd for it.

AFTER these Predictions, as if vex'd

at his own Disappointment in missing the Reward he expected, and with a Purpose to revenge himself on the *Israelites*, as the Occasion of it, he instructed the *Moabites* and *Midianites* in a wicked * Device ; which was, to send their Daughters into the Camp of the *Israelites*, in order to draw them first into Lewdness, and then into Idolatry, the sure Method to deprive them of the Assistance of that God, who protected them. This Artifice succeeded ; (for the very next Account we have of the *Israelites*, is, that they lay encamp'd at *Shittim*, where many of them † were deluded by these strange Women, not only to commit Whoredom with them, but to assist at their Sacrifices, and worship their Gods, even * *Baal-peor*) and was a Crime so detestable to God, that he punish'd it with

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ronomy.

a Plague,

" make their own Speeches ? We are only the passive Instruments of the Oracle. The Words are put in our Mouths ; " and we neither think, nor know what we say. I remember well, *says he*, that I was invited hither, with great " Earnestness, both by yourself, and by the *Midianites* ; and that it was at your Request I came, and with a Desire " to do all, that in me lay, for your Service. But what am I able to do against the Will and Power of God ? I " had not the least Thought of speaking one good Word of the *Israelites* Army, or of the Blessings, which God hath " in Store for them ; but, since God has decreed to make them great and happy, I have been forc'd to speak, as " you have heard, instead of what I had otherwise design'd to say." *Jewish Antiq. Lib. iv. cap. 6.*

* Tho' *Moses* makes no mention of this Contrivance, where he describes the Interview between *Balaam* and *Balak* ; yet, in the xxxist Chapter of *Numbers*, Ver. 16. he lays the whole Blame upon *Balaam* ; and *Josephus* accordingly informs us, that, after he had gone as far as the River *Euphrates*, he bethought himself of this Project, and, having sent for *Balak*, and the Princes of *Midian*, he thus address'd himself to them. " To the End that King *Balak*, *says* " *he*, and you the Princes of *Midian*, may know the great Desire I have to please you, tho', in some Sort, against the " Will of God ; I have thought of an *Expedient*, that may perhaps be for your Service. Never flatter yourselves " that the *Hebrews* are to be destroy'd by Wars, Pestilence, Famine, or any other of these common Calamities ; for " they are so secure under God's special Providence, that they are never totally to be extinguish'd by any of these " depopulating Judgments : But, if any small, and temporary Advantage against them will give you any Satisfaction, " hearken to my Advice. Send into their Camp a Procession of the loveliest Virgins you can pick up ; and, to im- " prove Nature, dress them up with all the Ornaments of Art, and give them their Lessons, how to behave them- " selves upon all Occasions of *Courtship* and *Amour*. If the young Men shall make Love, and proceed to any Impor- " tunities, let them threaten immediately to be gone, unless they will actually renounce their Country's Laws, and " the Honour of that God, who prescrib'd them, and finally engage themselves to worship after the Manner of the " *Midianites* and *Moabites*. This, *says he*, will provoke God, and draw Vengeance upon their Heads." *Jewish Antiq. ibid.*

† The *Jewish* Doctors tell us, that, on a great Festival, which the *Moabites* made in Honour of their God *Baal-peor*, some *Israelites*, who happen'd to be there, casting their Eyes upon their young Women, were smitten with their Beauty, and courted their Enjoyment ; but, that the Women would not yield to their Motion, upon any other Con- dition, than, that they would worship their Gods. Whereupon, pulling a little Image of *Peor* out of their Bosom, they presented it to the *Israelites* to kiss, and then desir'd them to eat of the Sacrifices, which had been offer'd to him. But *Josephus* tells the Story otherwise, *viz.* That the Women, upon some Pretence or other, came into the *Israelitish* Camp, and, when they had enamour'd the young *Hebrews*, according to their Instructions, they made a Pretence, as tho' they must be gone ; but, upon passionate Entreaties, accompanied with Vows and Oaths on the other Side, the subtle *Enchantresses* consented to stay with them, and grant them every Thing that they desir'd, upon Condition that they would embrace their Religion. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Josephus*, *ibid.*

* The *Jewish* Doctors are generally of Opinion, that this *Baal-peor* was the same with *Priapus*, the Idol of *Tur- pitude* ; and that the Worship of him consisted in such obscene Practices, or Postures at least, as were not fit to be named. Others have asserted, that this God was the same with *Saturn*, a Deity ador'd in *Arabia* ; nor is it unlikely, that the Adventure related of *Saturn*, and his Castration by his own Son, may have introduc'd the Obscenities, that are practis'd in the Worship of this Idol. But others, with great Assurance, maintain, that *Peor* was the same with *Adonis*, whose Feasts were celebrated in the Manner of Funerals, but the People, who observ'd them, at that Time, committed

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a Plague, which, in a short Time, carry'd off || about twenty four Thousand of the Offenders. This however was not the only Punishment, which God exacted: For he commanded *Moses* † to erect a Court of *Judicature* consisting of the Heads of all the Families, and to try and hang all, that had been guilty of this Whoredom and Idolatry; without Respect to Friendship or Kindred; which was accordingly done, and about one Thousand more were in this Manner put to Death.

By this Time, the greatest Part of the People, being come a little to themselves, were bewailing their Folly and Wickedness, at the Door of the Tabernacle; when they were surpriz'd with * an Instance of the most unparallel'd Boldness in one of the Chiefs of the Tribe of *Simeon*, nam'd *Zimri*, who, in the Sight of *Moses*, and the whole Congregation, had brought a young *Midianitish* Princess, whose Name was *Coxbi*, into the Camp, and was leading her into his Tent. Their Impudence however

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The Impudence and Punishment of *Zimri*.

committed a thousand dissolute Actions, particularly when they were told, that *Adonis*, whom they had mourn'd for as dead, was return'd to Life again. However this be, it is very probable, that as *Peor* was the Name of a Mountain in the Country of *Moab*, the Temple of *Baal* stood upon it, and thence he was call'd *Baal-Peor*. *Calmer's Commentaries and Dissertations. Patrick's Commentary, and Selden de Diis Syris.*

|| *St Paul*, in his Observations upon the Judgments, which beset the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, tells us expressly, that the Number of those, who were cut off in this Plague, was no more than *three and twenty Thousand*, 1 Cor. x. 8. Whereas *Moses* makes them no less than *four and twenty Thousand*. But this Difference is easily reconcil'd, if we do but consider, that in the *four and twenty Thousand*, which *Moses* computes, the Thousand, who were convicted of Idolatry, and thereupon were slain with the Sword, in the Day of the Plague, (Numb. xxv. 5, 18.) are comprehended; whereas the Apostle speaks of none, but those, that died of the Pestilence. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† According to our Translation, the Command, which God gave *Moses*, runs thus: — Take all the Heads of the People, and hang them up before the Lord, against the Sun, that the fierce Anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel, Numb. xxv. 4: But unless we can suppose, that the Heads of each Tribe were guilty of this Lewdness and Idolatry, the Sentence here denounc'd wou'd have been highly unjust: And, what others alledge, that they were guilty of a shameful Neglect in not opposing the growing Mischiefs, and punishing the Offenders; this might be very probably out of their Power, since even *Moses* himself, very frequently, found them too headstrong for him. It was somewhat strange therefore, that our Translators shou'd take the Passage in this Sense, when the *Samaritan Copy*, the *Jerusalem Targum*, most of the antient Translations, and several later Commentators of great Note, have made the Word *Otham*, i. e. them, not to refer to the Heads of the People, but to such as had join'd themselves to *Baal-peor*: And so the Meaning of the Command will be, that the Heads of the People shou'd divide themselves into several Courts of Judgment, and examine who had committed Idolatry, and, after Conviction, cause them to be hang'd, i. e. hang'd after they were ston'd; for among the *Hebrews* none were hang'd alive, but in the Cases of Idolatry, or Blasphemy, were first ston'd, and then hang'd up against the Sun, i. e. publicly and openly, that all the People might see, and fear to sin. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* When the *Israelites*, at the Instigation of the strange Women, they had receiv'd into the Camp, were fallen from Lust into Idolatry, *Moses* (according to *Josephus*) perceiving that the Infection began to spread, call'd the People together, and, in a general Discourse, reminded them how unworthy a Thing it was, and how great a Scandal to the Memory of their Ancestors, for them to value the gratifying their Lusts and Appetites, above the Reverence, they ow'd to their God, and their Religion; how incongruous a Thing, for Men, that had been virtuous and modest in the Desert, to lead such profligate Lives in a good Country, and squander away that in Luxury, which they had honestly acquir'd in the Time of their Distress; and thereupon he admonish'd them to repent in Time, and to shew themselves brave Men, not in the Violation of the Laws, but in the Mastery of their unruly Affections. This he spoke without naming any one: But *Zimri*, who took himself to be pointed at, rose up, and made the following Speech. “ You are at Liberty, *Moses*, says he, to use your own Laws: They have been a long Time in Exercise, and Custom is all that can be said for their Strength or Credit. Were it not for this, you wou'd, to your Cost, have found long since, that the *Hebrews* are not to be impos'd upon; and I myself am one of the Number, that never will truckle to your tyrannical Oppression. For what's your Business all this while, but, under a bare Pretext, and Talk of Laws, and God, to bar us, not only from the Exercise, but the very Desire of Liberty? What are we the better for coming out of Egypt, if it be only in Exchange for a more grievous Bondage under *Moses*? You are to make here what Laws you please, and we to abide the Penalties of them, when at the same Time, 'tis you only, that deserve to be punish'd for abolishing such Customs, as are authoriz'd by the common Consent of Nations, and setting up your own Will and Fancy against general Practice and Reason. For my own Part, what I have done, I take to be well done, and shall make no Difficulty to confess and justify it. I have, as you say, marry'd a strange Woman. I speak this with the Liberty of an honest Man; and I care not who knows it. I never meant to make a Secret of it, and you need look no farther for an Informer. I do acknowledge too, that I have chang'd my Way of Worship, and reckon it very reasonable for a Man to examine all Things, that wou'd find out the Truth, without being tied up (as if it were in a despotick Government) to the Opinion and Humour of one single Man.” *Jewish Antiq. Lib. iv. c. 6.*

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however did not go unpunish'd; for *Phineas*, the Son of *ELEAZAR* the High-Priest, fir'd with a just Indignation and holy Zeal, follow'd them into the Tent, with a Javelin in his Hand, where, in the very Act of Whoredom *, he thrust them both through the Body, and, by this Action not only obtain'd an high Commendation from God, but an Establishment likewise of † the *Aaronical* Priesthood in him, and his Posterity, for ever after.

As soon as this Disorder was quieted, and the Offenders punish'd, *Moses* began to bethink himself of revenging the Indignity, which the *Moabites* and *Midianites* had put upon *Israel*; and, to this Purpose, commanded a Detachment of twelve Thousand choice Men, i. e. * a Thousand out of every Tribe, to go against them; among whom was the † gallant *Phineas*, who took with him the Ark, and what was repositd therein, together with the sacred

From Numb. xviii. to the End of Deuteronomy.
The total Defeat and Slaughter of the Moabites and Midianites.

* Upon this Fact the *Jews* found what they call the *Judgment of Zeal*, which authoriz'd such, as were full of this holy *Fervour*, to punish any violent Offenders, those, to wit, who blasphem'd God, or profan'd the Temple, &c. in the Presence of ten Men of *Israel*, without any formal Process. But this Example of *Phineas* countenances no such Practice; nor can this Action, done upon an extraordinary Occasion, by a Person in a publick Authority, mov'd thereunto by a strong divine Impulse, and (what is a Circumstance, that some People add) in a Commonwealth not perfectly settled, be made a *Precedent* for private Men, under a different Situation, to invade the Office of the Magistrate, and, with enthusiastick Rage, to persecute even those, that are most innocent; as we plainly find it happen'd among the *Jews*, when, in the latter Times of their Government, they put this Precedent in Execution; of which *St Stephen*, whom they inhumanly ston'd, and *St Paul*, whom they vow'd to assassinate, without any Form of Justice, are notorious Instances. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

† This however is to be understood with a certain Limitation; because it is manifest, that, after some Successions in the Line of *Phineas*, the Priesthood came, for a while, into the Family of *Eli*, who was descended from *Ithamar*, the youngest Son of *Aaron*. The Reason of this Interruption is not mention'd in Scripture; but some great Sin, 'tis reasonable to suppose, provok'd God to set aside the Line of *Eleazar* for some Years, till *Eli's* Sons likewise became so wicked, that the Priesthood was taken from them, and restor'd, in the Days of *Solomon*, to the Posterity of *Phineas*, with whom it continu'd, as long as the Priesthood lasted. And this is enough to verify the Promise of an *everlasting Priesthood*, since the Words, *Everlasting*, *Perpetual*, and the like, in a general and indefinite Sense, denote no more than a *long Duration*. But there is another Way of solving this Difficulty: God had, before this Time, limited the Priesthood to *Aaron* and his Descendants, and to them it was to be an *everlasting Priesthood, throughout their Generations*, *Exod. xl. 15.* upon this Account it might properly enough be call'd, as limited to that Family, the *everlasting Priesthood*. So that, God does not here promise *Phineas*, and his Seed after him, an *everlasting Grant* of the Priesthood, as some Commentators take it; nor a Grant of an *everlasting Priesthood*, as our *English* Version renders it, but rather a Grant of the *everlasting Priesthood*, i. e. of the Priesthood limited to *Aaron* and his Descendants by that Appellation. *Selden*, de Success. Pontif. Lib. i. c. 2. and *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. III. Lib. xii.

* The Scripture gives us no Account of the Order of Battle between these two Armies; but, in all Probability, they were dispos'd according to the Method of the antient People of *Asia*; and therefore we may range the *Israelites* upon one Line, form'd of twelve Corps, consisting of a Thousand Men each, at the Head of which was the Ark of the Covenant, surrounded by the Priests and Levites, whose Business it was to sound the Charge, as well as defend the Ark. The *Midianites*, we may suppose, were, in like Manner, rang'd in a *Phalanx*, upon one Line, and, as the *Israelites* were doubtless much inferior in Number to their Enemies, they made much larger Intervals between the Corps of a thousand Men each, in order to penetrate the Enemies Front in different Places. This was the constant Practice of the *Jews*, whenever they were inferior in Number to their Enemies. *Calmet's* Dictionary under the Word *Midianites*.

† Whether this *Phineas* was sent to command the Troops, which were appointed by God to take Vengeance on the *Midianites*, or whether he went along with the Army, only to perform such sacred Offices, as should be requir'd by the General, (who with more Probability perhaps is thought to be *Joshua*) are Questions arising from the Silence of Scripture concerning the chief Commander. *Phineas* indeed was a Man of great Courage, and had lately perform'd a singular Piece of Service, which had gain'd him great Reputation; and from hence some have imagin'd, that he was the fitter Person to be sent with an Army to *avenge the Lord of Midian*; as it is certain, that, in After-Ages, the *Maccabees* (who were of the Family of the Priests) were appointed chief Commanders. But then it must be considered, that these *Maccabees* were the supreme Governors of the People, and, as such, had a Right to the military Command; that, in the War with the *Amorites*, *Moses* had sent the Forces under *Joshua's* Conduct; and that *Phineas*, in short, had another Province appointed him, which was to take care of the holy Instruments: But what these Instruments were, is another Question. Several Interpreters are of Opinion, that they were the *Urim* and *Thummim*, which *Phineas* might take along with him, in order to consult God, in case of any Difficulty that might arise in the Management of the War; and to countenance this, they suppose that *Eleazar* was superannuated, and his Son substituted in his Room. But it may be justly doubted, whether *Phineas*, being the only Son of the High-Priest, and not yet capable of that Office, could be substituted to perform this great Charge, which belong'd to the High-Priest alone: Nor do we find any Warrant for consulting the Lord by *Urim* and *Thummim*, but only before the Tabernacle. It seems therefore

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sacred *Trumpets*, to blow in the Time of Action, in order to animate the Men. The *Jewish* Army was but small in Comparison of the vast Numbers they march'd against; but God, who put them upon the Expedition, bless'd them with such Success, that they slew five Kings, and, among them, the wicked Prophet *Balaam*; put every one to the Sword, except Women and Children; and return'd to *Moses* with a very considerable Booty; one *fiftieth* Part of which he order'd to be given to the *Priests*, another *fiftieth* to the *Levites*, and the rest to be divided among the *Soldiery*.

THE Remembrance however of what Damage the *Midianitish* Women had done, by alluring the *Israelites* to Idolatry, made him think it unsafe to spare their Lives;

and therefore he order'd all those, that had ever known Man, as well as all the Male-children, to be immediately dispatch'd, and none, * but Virgins, to be sav'd alive; And yet (what shews the Greatness of the Victory) the Virgin-Captives amounted to two and thirty thousand, and the Plunder of Cattle and Flocks consisted of six hundred and seventy five thousand Sheep, seventy and two thousand Oxen, and sixty one thousand Asses, besides a great Quantity of rich Goods and Ornaments: And (what makes the Victory still more miraculous) not * one Man on the *Israelites* Side (as appears from the Report of the Officers made upon the Muster) was lost in this Engagement.

THE Officers of the Army were very sensible, that, in saving the Captive-Women

From Numb. xviii. to the End of Deuteronomy.

therefore much more likely, that, by the *holy Instruments*, *Moses* means the *Ark of the Covenant*, and what was included in it, which, in the following Ages, was wont to be carry'd into the Field, when the People went to fight against their Enemies. Nay, *Joshua* himself, not long after this, order'd the *Ark* to be carry'd, with Priests blowing *Trumpets* before it, when he surrounded *Jericho*, (*Josh. vi. 4, &c.*) And therefore, since the *holy Instruments* are here join'd with the *Trumpets*, it looks very probable, that they should signify the *Ark*. Nor can we apprehend that *Moses* ran any Risk in venturing the *Ark* upon this Occasion, because God had assur'd his People, that they should obtain a compleat Victory over the *Midianites*. It must be confess'd however, that the *Ark* is never thus express'd in another Part of Scripture, and therefore perhaps they give as true a Sense of the Words as any, who make the *holy Instruments* and *Trumpets* to be one and the same Thing, and the latter no more than an Explication of the former; which *Trumpets* the Priests were commanded to take with them, that they might sound a Charge, when the Engagement begun, according to their Direction, *Numb. x. 8, 9.* and as the Practice was in future Ages, *2 Chron. xiii. 12.*

† *Moses* order'd the Male-children to be slain, that thereby he might extirpate the whole Nation, as far as lay in his Power, and prevent their avenging the Death of their Parents, in case they were suffer'd to live to Man's Estate. For it is no hard Matter to conceive, how dangerous such a Number of Slaves, conscious that they were born free, and had lost their Liberty with the Massacre of their Parents, might have prov'd to a Commonwealth, every where surrounded with Enemies. Why he was so severe against the Women we need not wonder, if we do but consider, that, either by prostituting themselves, or their Daughters, they had been the chief Instruments of drawing the *Israelites* into Idolatry.

————— *Et si nullum memorabile Nomen*

Fœmineâ in pœnâ est, nec habet victoria laudem;

Extinxisse nefas tamen, & sumpsisse merentis

Laudabor pœnas. —————

Virg. Æn. Lib. ii. ver. 583.

Bibliotheca Bibl. and Le Clerc's Commentary, on Numb. xxx. 17.

* The *Jews* have a Tradition, that, in order to find out who were *real* Virgins, the young Women were plac'd, at a proper Distance with other Women, and all commanded to fix their Eyes upon the High-Priest's *Mitre*; whereupon those, who had *known Man*, turn'd instantly as pale as Ashes, and those, that had not, became as red as Fire. But there seems to be no great Occasion for this Miracle, when either the Appearance of an unqualify'd Age, or the Examination of some select Matrons might determine the Matter as well. *Bibliotheca Bibl. on Numb. xxxi. 18.*

* In the vth Chapter of the 1st Book of *Maccabees*, we have an Account of another Victory of the like Nature, when *Judas*, after having, several Times, defeated *Timotheus* the Heathen General, assaulted the City of *Ephron* a whole Day and a Night, and all without the Loss of a Man. For they went up to Mount Sion with Joy and Gladness, where they offered Burnt-Offerings, because not one of them was slain, until they had returned in Peace. And (if other Historians may be credited) the like has happen'd among other Nations. After the famous and bloody Battle of *Leuctra*, the *Lacedæmonians* and *Arcadians* had a very sharp Engagement, in which the latter lost many Thousands of Men, and the former not one: And, in a Sea-Engagement, between the *Portuguese* and the *Indians*, *Oforius Lusitanus* tells us, that the *Portuguese* Admiral, *Pacheco*, succeeded so well, that he kill'd above fifteen hundred of the Infidels, without the Loss of one Man. *De Rebus Emman. Lib. iii.* But whether this had any Thing miraculous in it, or was only the Effect of God's ordinary Providence, we shall not pretend to determine. *Bibliotheca Bibl. on Numb. xxi. 49.*

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men alive, they had transgress'd their Commission; and therefore * they presented a great Quantity of Jewels, and other rich Spoils, both as an *expiatory Offering* to atone for their Offence, and for a *gratulatory Offering*, in Acknowledgment of God's Goodness, in giving them so great and signal a Victory.

Moses divides
the Country of
Canaan among
the Tribes.

THE *Israelites*, by this Time, had made themselves Masters of the Country, that lay on the *Midianitish* Side of *Jordan*; and the Tribes of † *Reuben* and *Gad*, together with the half Tribe of *Manasseh*, observing that the Country was fertile, and stor'd with good Pasturage, desir'd of *Moses*, that they might be permitted to settle there, as a Place very commodious for them, who had large Stocks of Cattle; which (upon Condition that they should go over *Jordan*, and assist their Brethren in the Conquest of the Land of *Canaan*) *Moses* consented to. And, as they were now in the Neighbourhood of *Canaan*,

and just ready to enter upon the Possession of it, he took this Opportunity to appoint the Limits of what they were to conquer, and the Distribution of it by † Way of Lot, which he committed to the Management of *Joshua* and *Eleazar*, at the Head of the *Chiefs* of each Tribe.

JOSHUA was appointed by God to succeed *Moses* in his Commission; and therefore, to prevent any Contest after his Death, he first laid his own Hands upon him, and then presented him to *Eleazar* the High-Priest, who, in a solemn Form of Admission, and in the Presence of all the People, invested him with the Office of being the *Leader*, and *General* of all *Israel*, after *Moses* had given him several Directions relating to his Office, and one more especially, which concern'd his consulting of God by Way of *Urim* and *Thummim* upon every great Emergency. In the Division of the Country, *Moses* assign'd eight and forty Cities, together with

From Numb.
xviii. to the
End of Deute-
ronomy.

Makes Joshua
his Successor in
the Govern-
ment.

* The *Jerusalem Targum* supposes, that, when these Officers made their Offerings, they address'd themselves to *Moses* in the following Manner. "Forasmuch as the Lord has deliver'd the *Midianites* into our Hands, and we have subdu'd the Country, enter'd into their Chambers, and seen their fair and charming Daughters, took their Crowns of Gold from off their Heads, their Rings from their Ears and Fingers, their Bracelets from their Arms, and their Jewels from their Necks and Bosoms; therefore far be it from us to have turn'd our Eyes towards them. We had no Manner of Concern or Conversation with them, lest we should thereby die the Death of the Wicked in *Genena*. And let this be had in Remembrance on our Behalf, in the Day of the Great Judgment, to make a *Reconciliation* for our Souls before the Lord."

† In the Division of the Country, which the *Israelites* took from *Sihon* and *Og*, two vanquish'd Kings, that liv'd on the East Side of *Jordan*, and whose Dominions extended from the River *Arnon*, even as far as Mount *Hermon*, Deut. iii. 8. *Moses* gave to the Tribe of *Reuben* the southern, or rather the South-west Part of the Country, so that they were bounded to the South with the River *Arnon*; to the West, with *Jordan*; and to the North and East, with the Tribe of *Gad*. In this Tribe stood *Heshon*, the capital City of the Kingdom of *Sihon*, situate on the Hills over against *Jericho*, about twenty Miles distant from the River *Jordan*. The Tribe of *Gad* was bounded with the River *Jordan*, to the West; with the half Tribe of *Manasseh*, to the North; with the *Ammonites*, to the East; and with the Tribe of *Reuben*, to the South. In this Tribe stood *Astareth*, the capital City of the Kingdom of *Og*, which very likely obtain'd its Name from an *Idol*, which was much worshipp'd in those Times and Parts. How the half Tribe of *Manasseh* came to chuse to stay on the East Side of *Jordan*, the sacred History makes no mention; but it is reasonable to suppose, that, after they found that the Tribes of *Reuben* and *Gad* had succeeded in their Petition, they likewise might represent to *Moses* the great Stock of Cattle which they had; that the Country would be equally commodious for them, and was over large for two Tribes alone to occupy: Nor is it to be doubted, but that *Moses* was inclinable to listen to their Allegation, because the Sons of *Machir*, the Son of *Manasseh*, had, by their Valour, subdu'd a great Part of the Country, where they settled; which was bounded by the Tribe of *Gad*, to the South; with the Sea of *Cinnereth* (afterwards call'd the Lake of *Gennesareth*, or the Sea of *Galilee*) together with the Course of the River *Jordan*, from its Head to the said Sea, to the West; with Mount *Lebanon*, or more peculiarly Mount *Hermon*, to the North, and North-East; and with the Mountains of *Gilead* to the East. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. II.

† Nothing could more prudently be contriv'd, than this Partition of the Country by Lot, and making *Joshua* and the High-Priest Superintendants of it; since it was the only one, that could effectually prevent all Murmuring and Quarrellings among such an obdurate People, as the *Jews* were. However, as the Lots were to bear a Proportion to the Bigness of each Tribe and Family, it is suppos'd from what follow'd, that every Tribe first drew its Lot for its own Canton, and that then there were proper Persons appointed to measure out a Quantity of Land for each Family, according to their Bigness: But whether this, last was done by this or any other Method; whether the *Subdivisions* between the Families were likewise carry'd on by Lot; or otherwise, sure it is, that we read of no Broils or Jealousies, that it ever occasion'd among them. *Universal History*, Lib. i. c. 7.

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with their Suburbs, for the *Levites* to live in, and withal order'd, that six of these should be made *Cities of Refuge*, whither † the *innocent* Manlayer, who had kill'd his Neighbour by Chance, might betake himself; and live; tho' at the same Time, he made all proper Provision, that the *wilful* Murtherer should certainly be put to Death: But in this, and all other *capital* Cases, he made it a Law, that none should be convicted upon the Evidence of one single Person.

Makes his
Speeches to the
People.

THE nearer that *Moses* approach'd his Death, the more he express'd his Concern for the Welfare of the People, and therefore, on the *first* Day of the eleventh Month, (which answers our *January*) and in the *fortieth* Year from their Departure out of *Egypt*, being then encamp'd on the Plains of *Moab* by the Banks of the River *Jordan*, he call'd them all together, and, at different Times, made two very tender and pathetick Speeches, wherein he briefly related to them all that had befallen their Fathers, since the Time they left *Egypt*; the gracious Dealings of God with them; their continual Murmurings, and Rebelions against him; and the many severe

Judgments, that had follow'd thereupon, even to his *own* Exclusion from the promis'd Land. He gave them a *Summary* of all the Laws, which the divine Goodness had calculated for their Happiness; and, having repeated the *Decalogue* almost Word for Word, he reminded them of the solemn and dreadful Manner, in which it was deliver'd from Mount *Sinai*, and of the manifold Obligations, they lay under, to a strict Observance of it. He encourag'd them to be faithful to God, by assuring them, that if they kept his Commandments, they should not fail of having innumerable Blessings heap'd upon them, and by threatening them with all Manner of Calamities, if so be they departed from them. He renew'd the Covenant, which their Fathers had made with God at *Horeb*; commanded them to proclaim, on * the Mountains of *Gerizim* and *Hebal* beyond *Jordan*, Blessings to those, that observ'd, and Curses to those, that broke this COVENANT; and to erect an Altar there, whereon they were to † write, in a legible Character, the Terms and Conditions of it.

From Numb. xviii. to the End of Deuteronomy.

THESE,

† The Person, who, without any premeditated Malice, kill'd his Neighbour *accidentally*, had the best Provision imaginable made for his Escape. For the Ways, that led to the Cities of *Refuge*, were to be made very plain and broad, and kept in good Repair. Two *Students of the Law* were to accompany him, that, if the Avenger of Blood should overtake him, before he got to the City, they might endeavour to pacify him by wise Persuasions; and that he might not miss his Way to the Place, whither he intended to flee, there were Posts erected, where two or three Ways met, with the Word *Miklal*, i. e. the *City of Refuge*, inscrib'd on them, to direct him into the right Road, that led to it. *Patrick's Commentary*, on *Numb.* xxxv. 13.

† These two Mountains are situate in the Tribe of *Ephraim*, near *Shechem*, in the Province of *Samaria*, and are so near to one another, that nothing but a Valley of about two hundred Paces wide parts them; so that the Priests, standing and pronouncing the Blessings and Curses, that were to attend the Doers or Violators of the Law in a very loud and distinct Manner, might well enough be heard by the People, that were seated on the Sides of the two Hills, especially if the Priests were advanc'd upon Pulpits, (as *Ezra* afterwards was, *Nehem.* viii. 4.) and had their Pulpits plac'd at proper Distances. *Patrick's* and *Calmets* *Commentary*, in *Deut.* xxvii.

† In this twenty-seventh Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, the *Israelites* were commanded to write, upon certain Stones, all the Words of the Law very plainly, ver. 8. How many these Stones were the Scripture makes no mention; but some are of Opinion, that they were *twelve*, according to the Number of the Pillars, which *Moses* employ'd, (*Exod.* xxiv. 4.) when he made the Covenant between God and his People. Knew we for Certainty the Number of the Stones, we might better guess, what Part of the Law it was, which *Moses* order'd to be engraven upon them; since, by Reason of this Uncertainty, some will have it to be the whole *Pentateuch*; others, no more than the *Decalogue*; some, that *Summary* of the Laws, which is contain'd in this Book of *Deuteronomy*; and others, the Curses, which follow from *Deut.* xxvii. 15. to the End of Chap. xxviii. which seem to be more likely, because they contain select Precepts, and the last of them seems to comprize the whole Law, ver. 26. and *Josh.* viii. 34. But however we understand this, it is certain, that before the Use of *Paper* was found out, the *Ancients*, particularly the *Phoenicians*, and *Egyptians*, were wont to write their Minds upon Stones, as several Authors mention'd by *Huetius* (*Demonstrat. Evang. Propos.* 4. Chap. 2.) do abundantly testify. Nay, he observes, that this Custom continu'd long after the Invention of *Paper*, especially if Men desir'd, that any Thing should be publicly known, and transmitted down to Posterity. *Shuckford's* *Conneclion*, Vol. III. l. 12. and *Patrick's* *Commentary*.

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THESE, and several other Directions, relating to their future Conduct in the Land of *Canaan*, *Moses* not only deliver'd to the People by Word of Mouth, but order'd to be written in a Book, which he committed to the Care and Custody of the *Levites*, who, by God's Appointment, laid it up on the Side of the Ark, there to remain a Witness against the Children of *Israel*, in case they should rebel. And, that they might never want a proper Fund of Devotion, he compos'd a Song, or Poem, which he not only repeated to the People, but gave Orders likewise that they should all learn it by Heart: For therein he had express'd, in a very elegant Manner, the many Benefits and Favours of God to his People; their Ingratitude and Forgetfulness of him; the Punishment, wherewith he had afflicted them; and the Comminations of greater Judgments, if they persisted to provoke him by a Repetition of their Follies.

Moses takes a Farewell of the People, and goes up to Pisgah, to take a View of the promis'd Land, and there dies.

SUCH was the Care and Concern of the *Jewish* Law-giver for the Welfare of the People, after he was gone: And therefore, perceiving that the Time of his

Diffolution was now at hand, he call'd them together; and, having taken a solemn Farewel of them, in a *prophetick* Blessing, which he pronounc'd upon each Tribe, as *Jacob* had done just before his Death, he went up * to the Top of *Pisgah*, over-against *Jericho*, from whence he might take a full View of the Country, which God had promis'd to *Abraham's* Posterity. For, tho' he was an hundred and twenty Years old, yet his natural Strength and Vigour was not impair'd, nor had his Eye-sight in the least fail'd him; so that he was able to survey the beauteous Prospect, which the delightful Town and Plains of *Jericho*, and the fair Cliffs, and lofty Cedars of *Lebanon* afforded him; and, having done this, he resign'd his Soul into the Hands of *Seraphims*, who were waiting to convey it into an happier *Canaan*, than what he had been surveying; and, to prevent the Danger of the People's idolizing him when he was gone *, God himself took Care to bury his Body in so secret a Manner, in the Land of *Moab*, over-against *Beth-peor*, that the Place of his * Sepulchre was never yet discover'd.

From Numb. xviii. to the End of Deuteronomy.

THUS

* The Mountains of *Abarim* were a Ridge of Hills between the two Rivers *Arnon* and *Jordan*. One Part of these Mountains was distinguish'd by the Name of *Nebo*, as it appears from *Deut.* xxxii. 49. and comparing this with *Deut.* xxxiv. 1. we shall find that *Nebo* and *Pisgah* were one and the same Mountain, and, that if there was any Distinction between the Names, it was probably this, that the Top of the Mountain was more peculiarly call'd *Pisgah*, because it comes from a Root, which signifies to *elevate*, or *raise up*, and so may very properly denote the Top or Summit of any Mountain. Not far from *Nebo*, was *Beth-peor*, which very probably was so call'd from some Deity of the same Name, that was worshipp'd there. But of all these Mountains it must be observ'd, that, tho' they are said to be in the Land of *Moab*, yet they really stood in the Territories of *Sihon*, King of the *Amorites*, however they retain'd their old Names, because once they belong'd to the *Moabites*. Numb. xxi. 26.

* This very Reason we have in R. *Levi Ben Gershom*. "Future Generations, says he, might perhaps have made a God of him, because of the Fame of his Miracles: For do we not see how some of the *Israelites* err'd in the *brazen Serpent*, which *Moses* made? And what then would they not have done, had they but known where his Remains were laid?" For this Reason, very likely, it was, that, how much soever *Moses* was in love with *Canaan*, he did not desire to be carry'd thither, to be bury'd with his Ancestors, as *Joseph* did; because his Interment in that Country might have prov'd of dangerous Consequence, if in their Distress (especially in the Captivity of the Land) the Children of *Israel* should have run to his Sepulchre, and begg'd of him to pray for them, whose Prayers and Intercession, in their Behalf, they had found, in his Life-Time, so very prevalent. *Patrick's Commentary*, on *Deut.* xxxiv. 6.

* But, notwithstanding all this Precaution of God, the Christians boast that they have discover'd the Sepulchre, which has been kept secret for so many Ages. For in the Year 1655, some Goats, that were separated from the rest of the Flock, went to feed in a certain Place, in the Mountain *Nebo*, and return'd from thence so odoriferous and perfum'd, that the Shepherds, astonish'd at so wonderful a Prodigy, ran presently to consult with the Patriarch of the *Maronites*, who sent thither two Monks from Mount *Lebanon*, and they discover'd a Monument, on which was this Inscription, *Moses, the Servant of the Lord*. But there is too much Reason to think, that this is all a Fiction, on Purpose to raise the Reputation of the *Maronites*; as *Bosnage*, in his History and Religion of the *Jews*, has sufficiently prov'd, Lib. iv. cap. 17.

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THUS died * *Moses*, the * illustrious Prophet and Servant of God; and, when the People of *Israel* came to understand

that he was dead, with great Solemnity, they lamented for him, for the Space of thirty Days.

From Numb. xviii. to the End of Deuteronomy.

The OBJECTION.

“ **W**HOEVER wrote the Character of *Moses*, at the Conclusion of *Deuteronomy*, (for we can hardly presume that it was *Moses* himself) has not perhaps transcended the Truth, in calling him a *Prophet*, superior to any, that had *then* arose in *Israel*, highly in Favour of God, and admitted to a nearer Communion with him; but certainly he means to put a Banter upon our Faith, when he would persuade us, that a Person an hundred and twenty Years old (as *Moses* was) could take a perfect View of the Land of *Canaan* (*f*), which extends from *Egypt* to *Phœnicia*, seventy Leagues in Length, and,

“ from the *Mediterranean* Sea to the Mountains of *Libanus*, at least, *thirty* Leagues in *Breadth*: Nor can we see, for what Reason (if such Pains was taken to shew him the promis’d Land) God should be so highly provok’d against his favourite Servant, as to seclude him, when just at the Entrance of it, from taking Possession of it.

“ BUT he did not do so with *Phineas*, the Priest, whom he so highly extols, tho’ his Act was certainly more rash and unjustifiable, than any we find recorded of *Moses*. *Zimri*, we are told, was a *Prince of a chief House among the Simeonites*, and consequently, was “ not

* Nothing can be plainer from the Text, than that *Moses* did die, and was really bury’d; nay, *Josephus* tells us, that the Scripture affirms, that he died, lest People should think, because of the Excellency of his Person, that he was still alive, and with God. And yet, notwithstanding this, some of the *Jewish* Doctors do positively affirm, that he was translated into Heaven, where he stands, and ministers before God: And, of those, who admit of his Death, and that his Soul and Body were really separated, the major Part will not allow, that he died a common Death; for their Notion is, that *his Soul departed with a Kiss*, because he is said to die, *al pi, at the Mouth* (as it is literally in the Hebrew, *i. e. according to the Word*) of God; but if there be any Sense in the Expression, it must be, that he parted with his Soul with great Chearfulness and Serenity of Mind. *Witsius’s Miscel. sacra.*

* The Commendation, which the Author of *Ecclesiasticus* gives *Moses*, is conceiv’d in these Words: — “ *Moses* was beloved of God and Men, and his Memorial is blessed. The Lord made him like to the glorious Saints, and magnified him so, that his Enemies stood in Fear of him, and by his Word he caused the Wonders to cease, and he made him glorious in the Sight of Kings, gave him Ordinances for his People, and shewed him part of his Glory. He sanctified him in his Faithfulness and Meekness, and chose him out of all Men. He made him to hear his Voice, and brought him into the dark Cloud, and gave him Commandments before his Face, even the Law of Life and Knowledge, that he might teach *Jacob* his Covenant, and *Israel* his Judgments,” Chap. xlv. 1, &c. The Character which *Josephus* gives him is to this Effect: — “ He was a Man of admirable Wisdom, and one, that made the best Use of what he understood: An excellent Speaker, and no Man better skill’d in moving the Affections of the People than himself: And so great a Master of his Passions, that he liv’d as though he had none, or as if he only knew them by their Names, or by observing them in others. Never was there a greater Captain, nor a Prophet equal to him; for all his Words were Oracles.” So true is the Character, which the sacred Writer has given of him. *There arose not a Prophet since in Israel, like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew Face to Face, in all the Signs, and the Wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the Land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his Servants, and to all the Land, and in all that mighty Hand, and in all that great Terror, which Moses shewed in the Sight of all Israel, Dent. xxxiv. 10, &c.* “ Nor was he less famous to Posterity for his Writings, than he was to the Age he liv’d in for his Actions.” For, besides the *Pentateuch*, (which is all of his own Composition, except the *conclusive* Chapter) the Ancients generally thought, that he was the Author of the Book of *Job*, and of eleven Psalms, which begin at the 90th, and end with the 100th, as there were once other Books, such as his *Lesser Genesis*, the *Revelation of Moses*, the *Ascension of Moses*, the *Assumption of Moses*, and the *mysterious Books of Moses*, cited by some ancient Writers, which were likewise ascrib’d to him. And though they have long since lost their Authority, and been exploded as *spurious*; yet are they still an Argument of the Greatness of his Name, when so many Authors, to recommend their own Performances, were so ambitious to assume it. *Josephus’s Antiq. Lib. iv. c. 8. and Calmet’s Dictionary, under the Word Moses.*

(*f*) *Lamy’s Introduction, Lib. i. c. 3.*

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2515, 1890.
Ant. Christ.
1489, 1890.

“ not accountable to *Phineas* for his Be-
“ haviour. His Behaviour, 'tis own'd,
“ was vile and profligate enough, but there
“ then were proper Courts of Judicature,
“ wherein to implead him, and to bring
“ him to condign Punishment. The *Le-*
“ *vites* were remarkable for slaying some
“ Idolaters in another Case, *Exod. xxxii.*
“ *27, 28.* but then they had a divine
“ Commission for what they did, but
“ for any hot-brain'd Zealot, without any
“ Call from God, or Order from his Su-
“ periors, to take the Sword, and to turn
“ *Avenger to execute his Wrath* upon ano-
“ ther Person, that he thinks does ill;
“ this is invading the Magistrate's Office
“ with a Witness, dissolving all civil Or-
“ der and Government, encouraging Mur-
“ thers, and Assassinations; and what has
“ been a fatal Precedent to incite and abet
“ the most inhuman Actions.
“ I. T. cannot be deny'd, indeed, but
“ that God was very kind to the *Israe-*
“ *lites*, during their Sojourning in a naked
“ and barren Wilderness; but *Moses* seems
“ to carry the Matter a little too far,
“ when he tells them, (g) *that their Rai-*
“ *ment and Shoes waxed not old upon them,*
“ *neither did their Feet swell for forty*
“ *Years*: Unless we can suppose, that
“ God made *their Shoes of Iron*, and their
“ Coats of *Buff*; enlarg'd their Cloaths,
“ in Proportion as they grew bigger, and
“ wrought a perpetual Miracle upon eve-
“ ry Garment they wore, which is a
“ little too much for our present Dige-
“ stion.

“ WHEN *Balaam* spake in Commen-
“ dation of the *Israelites*, he certainly
“ spake by a divine Impulse, for he him-
“ self never wish'd them well; and yet,
“ the Compliment is not only extravagant,
“ but quite abhorrent to Truth, when he
“ declares, that (h) *God had not beheld*
“ *Iniquity in Jacob, nor seen Perverseness*
“ *in Israel*, tho' it is notorious, that there
“ was not a more perverse Generation
“ under the Copes of Heaven; a *stiff-*

“ neck'd People, and rebellious against the
“ Lord, as both the Lord, and his Ser-
“ vant *Moses* calls them. From Numb.
xviii. to the
End of Deute-
ronomy.

“ NOR is the Account, which *Balaam*
“ gives us of himself, less absurd and con-
“ tradictory, than what he tells us of the
“ *Israelites*: For, when, in that noted
“ Proem to his Prophecy, he begins with
“ (i) *Balaam, the Son of Beor, hath said;*
“ *who heard the Words of God, and saw*
“ *the Vision of the Almighty*; what can
“ we imagine that he means by all this?
“ Can any one suppose, that God would
“ ever communicate any Revelation to
“ such an impious Wretch, as he was
“ known to be? Or, that the Prince of
“ *Moab*, and all his Council should be
“ so far infatuated, as to think that it lay
“ in the Power of any Man (much less
“ of such a Profligate) to do either Good
“ or Evil to their Enemies, and, by the
“ Breath of his Mouth, to alter the Fate
“ of War?

“ *MOSES* indeed may be suppos'd to
“ have had some Portion of a divine Spi-
“ rit residing in him, and might therefore
“ foretel the (k) *Coming of a Prophet,*
“ *raised up among his Brethren*, or de-
“ scended from a Jewish Race, like unto
“ himself, which nevertheless, might re-
“ late to *Joshua*, or any other Prophet,
“ as well as the *Messias*: But that so
“ wicked a Miscreant, as *Balaam*, shou'd
“ prophesy of our Saviour's Advent, (l)
“ under the Image of a *Star* coming out
“ of *Jacob*, and a *Sceptre* rising out of
“ *Israel*, is the most incongruous Thing
“ in Nature; and therefore, if there be a
“ Designation of any Person in the Words,
“ it must necessarily refer us to some such
“ King as *David*, who, in a literal Sense,
“ *smote the Corners of Moab, and destroyed*
“ *the Children of Seth*.

“ THE Truth is, the whole Adventure
“ of *Balaam* and his *Ass* is so very ro-
“ mantick, that we do not well know
“ what to make of it. For, in the first
“ Place, if God was averse to his going
“ with

(g) Deut. viii. 4. and xxix. 5.
(h) Numb. xxiv. 17.

(i) Numb. xxiii. 21.

(j) Numb. xxiv. 3, 4.

(k) Deut. xviii. 15.

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“ with the Princes of *Moab*, why did
“ he permit him to go? After such Permis-
“ sion, why was *his Anger kindled against*
“ *him* for going? If he had been minded
“ to obstruct his Journey, this certainly
“ might have been done in a much more
“ easy and compedious Way, than by giv-
“ ing himself the Trouble to send an An-
“ gel Express, and *(m) to open the Mouth*
“ *of the dumb Ass, to forbid the Madness*
“ *of the Prophet.*

“ IN *Poets*, and other visionary Wri-
“ ters, we sometimes read of *dumb Crea-*
“ *tures* speaking. The Ram of *Phrix-*
“ *us*, the Horse of *Achilles*, the Bull of
“ *Europa*, &c. are Instances of this Kind:
“ But, in so grave and inspir’d an Author
“ as *Moses* is reputed to be, and on so
“ trivial an Occasion as this, ’tis the Height
“ of Absurdity to meet with a *loquacious*
“ *Ass*; and (what is the Wonder of all)
“ to find *Balaam* not at all startled to
“ hear her speak, but immediately en-
“ tering into Discourse with her, as if
“ they had been old Companions, and
“ had held many a Dialogue together be-
“ fore.

“ *BALAM*, in short, was an odd
“ Mixture of a Man. Here we find him
“ endeavouring what he could to curse
“ the People of God, and immediately
“ professing that he *would (n) take Heed*
“ *to speak nothing, but what the Lord*
“ *should put in his Mouth*; for the *Wages*
“ *of Unrighteousness* now betaking him-
“ self to diabolical *Enchantments*, and a-
“ non, in a devotional Fit, sending up
“ his Prayer to God, *(o) Let me die the*
“ *Death of the Righteous, and let my last*
“ *End be like his.* However, he was far
“ from obtaining his Request; for tho’
“ one Part of the History says, that *(p)*
“ *he went and returned to his Place, i. e.*
“ *his own House in Mesopotamia*, upon
“ the Banks of *Euphrates*; yet we find
“ in another, that, together with five of
“ the *Midianitish Kings*, *(q) Balaam the*
“ *Son of Beor was slain by the Sword*: So

NUMB. XXXVI.

“ very inconsistent is the Account which
“ *Moses* has given us of this wild *En-*
“ *chanter.*

“ IN recounting the manifold Mercies
“ of God, *Moses* reminds the People, that
“ *(r) in the great and terrible Wilderness,*
“ *where they sojourn’d so long, there*
“ *were Serpents and Scorpions* in Abun-
“ dance, so that it is no Wonder at all
“ that they were stung with them; the
“ Wonder is, how they came to escape so
“ long, and how the *Image* of a Serpent,
“ which had done them so much Harm,
“ should cure them by Intuition. Men
“ generally abhor the Sight even of the
“ Figure of any Thing, that they have
“ suffer’d much by; and therefore we
“ cannot but conceive, that this Brazen
“ Serpent fix’d upon a Pole, must have
“ been a Means to inflame, rather than
“ allay the Poison, which the living ones
“ had infus’d, in all Persons directed to
“ look up to it.

“ BUT the *Mistake of proper Means* is
“ not the worst Imputation, that this
“ Part of the *Mosaick History* throws
“ upon God. *(s) God is merciful, and*
“ *gracious, long-suffering, and abundant*
“ *in Mercy and Truth, forgiving Iniquity,*
“ *Transgression, and Sin*; and yet herein
“ is he represented, not only as raving,
“ and *(t) swearing in his Wrath*, but
“ commanding the *Israelites* likewise to
“ extirpate whole Nations, who had ne-
“ ver done them any Injury; and, in
“ doing of this, to proceed with the ut-
“ most Barbarity, to slay Men, Women,
“ and Children, whereof the *last*, at
“ least, (in Hopes of their Conversion)
“ might more properly have been sav’d
“ alive.

“ AGAIN, God is the general Father,
“ and universal Lover of Mankind; for
“ *(u) he is no Respector of Persons, but in*
“ *every Nation, he that feareth him, and*
“ *worketh Righteousness, is accepted with*
“ *him*; and yet, as if the rest of Mankind
“ were mere Reprobates, we find him
“ enjoining

(m) Numb. xxii. 28. and 2 Pet. ii. 16.
xxiv. 25. (q) Numb. xxxi. 8.

(n) Acts x. 34, 35.

(o) Numb. xxiii. 12.

(r) Deut. viii. 15.

(s) Ver. 10.

(t) Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

(p) Numb.

(r) Deut. i. 34.

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xviii. to the
End of Deute-
ronomy.

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“ enjoining the *Israelites* to live a secluse,
“ unsociable Life ; to have no Intercourse
“ with other Nations ; but to look upon
“ them with an evil Eye, and as if they
“ were their Enemies. Once more, God
“ is a generous Benefactor : What he does,
“ he does *freely*, and without any By-
“ ends ; what he gives, he gives *cheer-*
“ *fully*, and *upbraideth not* ; and therefore
“ we cannot reconcile it to these Proper-
“ ties of his, that he should be so fre-
“ quently casting his People in the Teeth
“ with their former wretched Condition,
“ so incessantly reminding them, (x) that
“ *they were Bond-Men in Egypt*, and
“ that it was his Hand, and stretch’d-out
“ Arm, that deliver’d them. In a Word,
“ whatever argues Vanity or Insult, Nar-
“ rowness of Mind, or Cruelty of Tem-
“ per, can never belong to God ; and
“ therefore what ever *politick* Reasons
“ the *Israelites* might have for depopula-
“ ting whole Nations, and making the
“ Land of *Canaan* their own, they could
“ never receive this Injunction from the
“ Fountain of all Goodness ; (y) *Thou*
“ *shalt smite them, and utterly destroy*
“ *them, and make no Covenant with them,*
“ *nor have Compassion on them* ; (z) a
“ Command not only abhorrent to the
“ Nature of God, but inconsistent like-
“ wise with all those Duties, that Men,
“ as Men, owe to one another.”

Answer’d, by
showing who
the Author of
the last Chapter
of Deuterono-
my was.

BOTH *Philo* and *Josephus* are of Op-
inion, that the Account of *Moses’s* Death,
and Burial, of the Mourning, which the
Israelites made for him, and of the Cha-
racter, which, in the Conclusion of *Deu-*
teronomy, we find recorded of him, was
penn’d by *Moses* himself, in Consequence
of the *Prescience*, which God was pleas’d
to communicate to him : And the Reason
(a), which *Josephus* gives for his thus
relating the Circumstances of his *Death*
beforehand, is, that the People, out of
the great Veneration they had for his Per-

son, might not imagine that he was *tran-*
slated.

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ronomy.

BUT suppose this Account to have
been written after the Death of *Moses*, by
Joshua, *Eleazar*, or the *seventy Elders*,
or, (as some imagine) much later, by
Samuel, or even by *Ezra* himself, who,
after the *Babylonish* Captivity, made a Re-
vival of the sacred Books ; suppose it, I
say, to have been written by any other
Hand whatever, yet this can no Ways
affect the Authority of the rest of the
Pentateuch, or imply that *Moses* was not
the Writer of it, unless we will be so per-
verse as to say, that the Addition of some
few *Lines*, or even of a whole *Page*, as an
Appendix to another Man’s Book, makes
the Book no longer *his*.

THERE is another Opinion, which
seems very consonant both to Reason, and
Matter of Fact, and that is, that the
last of the Books of *Moses*, viz. the Book
of *Deuteronomy*, ended with his prophe-
tick Blessing † upon the twelve Tribes,
(b) *happy art thou, O Israel ! Who is like*
unto thee, O People, saved by the Lord,
&c. and that what makes now the *last*
Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, was formerly the
first of *Joshua*, but thence remov’d and
adjoin’d to the other by Way of *Sup-*
plement.

BEFORE the Invention of Sections,
and other Divisions, or so much as of
Pauses, and Points of Distinction ; and
when sometimes several Books were con-
nected together, and follow’d each other
upon the same Roll, (as the ancient Method
of Writing was) it is no hard Matter to
conceive, how easily the *Beginning* of one
Book might be transferr’d to the *End* of
another, and, in Process of Time, make
that be reputed the *Conclusion* of *Deutero-*
nomy, which was *originally* intended for
the *Introduction* to the Book of *Joshua*.
And, if this be the Case, ’tis no Wonder,
that we meet with several Passages in this
Introduction,

(x) Deut. xvi. 12.
History, lib. iv. c. 7.

(y) Deut. vii. 2.

(z) Christianity as old as the Creation, p. 273.

(a) Jewish

† All the Tribes are blessed, except the Tribe of *Simcon*, and his is included in what is said concerning *Judah*.

(b) Deut. xxxiii. 29.

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Introduction, which were in Reality wrote by a later Hand than *Moses*; But then, by whomsoever, or at what Time soever, these Passages were wrote, whether before, or after the Destruction of the first Temple, they can no ways invalidate the Authority of the other Parts of the Book of *Deuteronomy*, to which *imprudently*, and by Way of Mistake perhaps, they came to be annex'd: Nor can the *Canonicalness* of these very Passages be call'd in question; since it is agreed on all Hands, that they were written by a Person of a *prophetic* Spirit, and had in all Ages the Sanction of the great *Synagogue*.

No Impossibility in *Moses's* taking a View of the Land of Canaan.

BUT whoever was the Author of this additional Chapter in *Deuteronomy*, it cannot well be accounted an impossible Thing for God to shew *Moses* the Compass of the Land of *Canaan*, from the Top of Mount *Nebo*. The *Jews* indeed have a Notion, that God laid before him a Map of the whole Country, and shew'd him therein how every Part of it was situate; where each *Valley* lay, each *Mountain* stood, each *River* ran, and for what remarkable *Product* each Place was renown'd: But, if this had been all, we cannot see for what Reason *Moses* was order'd to go upon the highest Part of the Mount, since in the lowest Plains of *Moab*, he might have given him a Demonstration of this Kind every whit as well.

It was for some Purpose therefore, that the *sacred* Historian has inform'd us, that tho' *Moses* was an hundred and twenty Years old, yet his Eyes were not dim: And if we suppose, that, upon this Occasion, God strengthen'd them, with a greater Vigour than ordinary, to enable him to take a larger Prospect of the Country, so that, from this Eminence, he might see *Dan* and Mount *Lebanon*, to the North; the Lake of *Sodom* and the City *Zoar*, to the South; the *Mediterranean-Sea* to the West; and (as the Town and Country of *Jericho* was just at Hand) he might

easily discern the Land of *Gilead* to the North-east. This indeed may be a Compass, above the Stretch of human Sight; but if God was pleas'd to assist his *visive* Faculties a little, the Matter might easily have been done: And, accordingly (c), some of the *Jewish* Doctors have been wise enough in putting together both the natural *Clearness* of *Moses's* Eyes, and the additional *Strength*, which God, at this Time, vouchsaf'd to give them; "For God shew'd him, say they, the whole Land, as in a Garden-plat; and gave his Eyes such Power of contemplating it, from the Beginning to the End, that he saw Hills and Dales, what was open, and what was enclos'd, remote or nigh, at one single View, or Intuition."

THE *Talmudists* have a very odd Conceit, that the great Sin, for which *Moses* was hinder'd from going into the Land of *Canaan*, was, because he call'd the People of God (d) *Rebels*; and from thence they have form'd a Maxim, that he, who treats the Church, which ought to be honoured, with Contempt, is, as if he blasphem'd the Name of God. But, in Opposition to this, it shou'd be consider'd, that *Moses*, on this Occasion, uses the very same Language, that God himself does, when he bids him (e) lay up the Rod of Aaron, as a Token against the Rebels; and that, if this was the Thing, wherein he offended God, he not long after committed the same Thing (which he would hardly have done, considering already that it had cost him so dear) when he told the People plainly, (f) ye have been rebellious against the Lord, ever since I knew you.

SEVERAL *Christian*, as well as *Jewish* Expositors, think, that the Transgression of *Moses* lay in *smiting* the Rock, when his Instructions only were to *speak* to it; and, for the Support of this they alledge, that God is an absolute Sovereign, expecting an absolute Obedience, and exacting Punishment even of his greatest Favourites, when they pretend to vary from his Commands,

From Numb. xviii. to the End of Deuteronomy.

His Offence, and why thought so criminal, as to exclude him from Canaan.

(c) Patrick's Commentary, on Deut. xxxiv.
(f) Deut. ix. 24.

(d) Numb. xx. 10.

(e) Ibid. chap. xvii. 10.

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mands, or to mix their own Conceptions with his Directions: And that there was some such Prevarication in the Conduct of *Moses* and *Aaron*, seems to be imply'd in God's Remonstrance, which immediately follows; (g) *because ye believed me not*, or (as it should be translated) *because ye were not faithful to me, to (sanctify and) glorify me in the Eyes of the Children of Israel; therefore ye shall not bring this Congregation into the Land which I have given them.*

It is granted indeed, that God order'd *Moses* to take his Rod with him, and why should he take it, unless it were to strike the Rock, as he had done before? But the *Israelites* perhaps, began now to entertain a superstitious Fancy of the Virtue of this Rod, which had been the Instrument of so many Miracles wrought before them; and therefore God was minded to give *Moses* an Opportunity of convincing them of their Folly, by making it appear, that neither himself, nor *Aaron*, nor the Rod, was of any Importance; that he alone was the Worker of Miracles, which he was able at any Time to do, by a Word's speaking. This had been doing Justice to the Honour of God, but instead of this, *Moses* spake and acted (h) *unadvisedly*, i. e. he spake and acted of himself, and what he had no Commission to do, and thereby gave the *Israelites* an Opportunity to imagine, that the Supply of Water might come from him, from his Power and Ability to procure it. The Truth is, the Divine Writers, who have touch'd upon this History, have made mention of two Defaults in *Moses*, viz. his *Impatience*, and his *Infidelity*; and therefore we may suppose, that (the Water now ceasing, at the Time, (i) when his Sister *Miriam* dy'd) he was exceedingly troubled on both these Accounts; that, unexpectedly assaulted by the People, who ought to have paid him more Reverence, especially in a Time of *Mourning*, he fell into a greater Commotion of Anger and Indig-

nation, than was usual in him; and that this Anger gave such a Disturbance to his Mind, and so disorder'd his Thoughts, that when God bad him *take his Rod, and go, and speak to the Rock*, he fell into some Doubt, whether the divine Goodness would grant the People the same Favour, he had done before; that therefore he struck the Rock with *Diffidence*, believing it improbable, that such worthless and rebellious Wretches should deserve a Miracle; and that, the Water not issuing out at the first *Stroke*, his Diffidence increas'd into *Unbelief*, and a settled Persuasion, that they should have none at all.

THERE is one Conjecture more of a very learned (k) Man, which I shall but just mention, viz. that *Moses* began to distrust God's Promise of entering into the Land of *Canaan* at the End of forty Years, and to imagine, that, if he brought Water again out of the Rock, it must follow them, as long as the other had done, and engage them again in the like Wanderings; and therefore the Comment which he makes upon *Moses's* Words is this: —
“ What, ye Rebels, must we bring Water
“ out of the Rock, as we did at *Horeb*?
“ Are all our Hopes and Expectations of
“ getting out of the Wilderness come to
“ this? We never fetch'd Water out of
“ the Rock but once, and that was,
“ because we were to stay a long Time
“ in the Wilderness; and must we begin
“ our Abode here again, when we thought
“ we had attain'd to the End of our
“ Travels?” And, with that, he smote the Rock in a Passion *twice*, whereas God had commanded him only to *speak to it*. But whichever of these Conjectures we are inclin'd to think most plausible, there are few Writers, who are not dispos'd to *extenuate* the Fault of *Moses*, as not deserving so severe a Punishment, had not God, in passing the Sentence of Exclusion upon him, consider'd the Eminence and Dignity of a Person in his Station, in whom

From Numb.
xviii. to the
End of Deute-
ronomy.

(g) Numb. xx. 1.
Temp.

(h) Psal. cvi. 33.

(i) Numb. xx. 1.

(k) *Lightfoot's* Chronica

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ronomy.

whom a Transgression of any Kind could not but be far more grievous and inexcusable, than in an *ordinary* Man.

FOR this Reason we may observe, that, when *Moses* has related the Wickedness and Punishment of *Zimri*, he takes Care to inform us (l) of his Family, his Titles, and his high Station in Life. He was the Prince of a Tribe, the Head of Thousands in *Israel*, and one of the renown'd Men of the Congregation. In this Capacity he had a Right to be an Assessor with *Moses* and *Aaron*, and the other Rulers, in the Government of the People; and, consequently, could not regularly be brought under the Sentence of those Judges, who were inferior to him. This he knew full well, and therefore, in Defiance of the Laws, and in Contempt of all Authority, (m) while the Children of *Israel* were weeping before the Door of the Congregation in the Sight of *Moses*, and in the Sight of all the People, he brought a Midianitish Woman into his Tent. *Moses* had order'd the (n) Judges to slay every one his Men; that were joined to *Baal-peor*; but we hear of none that were punished for this Wickedness, except this *Zimri*, and those that afterwards died in the Plague: The Transgression was become too universal to be corrected by a Judiciary Proceeding, and the Example of so leading a Man, was enough to bear all down before it, and make the Infection spread. God had already order'd, that the Persons, who committed this great Offence, should (o) be punish'd in a very exemplary Manner: In Regard to God therefore, *Zimri* was under Sentence of Condemnation, and, as his Guilt was too glaring and notorious to need Conviction, and the Judges were found timorous and remiss in the Execution of their Office, there was certainly wanting, on this important Occasion, a proper Person to supply their Place.

Now that the Act of *Phineas* in

slaying *Zimri* was not the Effect of Zeal, and warm Resentment only, but of a divine Impulse and Instigation so to do, I think is evident from the Testimony of God himself, when he declares to *Moses*, that *Phineas*, by the Death of *Zimri*, (p) had made an Atonement for the Children of *Israel*. For what Atonement could he pretend to make, unless God had appointed him? (q) No Man taketh this Honour upon himself, neither can any one perform this Office to good Purpose, but he that is called of God; as was *Aaron*. And therefore there is no Propriety in the Words, unless we suppose, that God order'd *Phineas* to make a Propitiatory Sacrifice of the Blood of the Offenders; and, for the Confirmation of this, we find God requiring of *Moses* to say to the People, (r) behold I give unto him my Covenant of Peace; or (as it should more truly be render'd) behold it was I, who gave unto him my Covenant of Peace: The Intent of which Declaration is to inform the Congregation, that *Phineas* had not done a rash Action, out of his own mere Motion and Warmness of Heart, but that he had the immediate Direction and Appointment of God for what he did; that God had made a previous Covenant with him to that Purpose; and given him positive Assurance, that, upon the Death of *Zimri* and *Cosbi*, slain by his Hands, the Wickedness, that had been committed in the Camp, should be forgiven. And therefore we find God espousing the Deed, and, in a Kind of Exultation, declaring (s) *Phineas*, the Son of *Eleazar*; the Son of *Aaron*, the Priest; in being thus zealous for my Sake, hath turned away my Wrath from the Children of *Israel*. In this View of the Fact all is clear; nor can this Example lay any Foundation for a dangerous Imitation, because it will in no wise prove, that an illegal Action, tho' proceeding from a most upright Heart, zealously affected in a good Thing, is ever to be justify'd,

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unless

(l) Numb. xxv. 14.

(m) Ver. 6.

(n) Ver. 5.

(o) Ver. 4.

(p) Ver. 13.

(q) Heb. v. 4.

(r) Numb. xxv. 12.

(s) Ver. 11.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.

In what Sense
the Israelites
Raiments
waxed not old.

unless God, by an express and well attested Revelation from Heaven, declares his Patronage and Acceptance of it.

THE *Jews*, who love to magnify Miracles, sometimes beyond their proper Bounds, have a current *Tradition*, that the Cloaths grew bigger, according as the Children themselves increas'd in Bulk and Stature: But there is no Occasion for any such Supposition as this; since the Younger, in their proper Degrees, might succeed to the Vestments of the Elder, and the Miracle still remain wonderful enough, that God should preserve these Vestments from decaying, or their Feet, by so long travelling in hot and stony Places, from *swelling*, or being *callous* (as some translate it) for the Space of *forty Years*. Some indeed will have the Phrase to denote, that their Feet were not sensible of any Uneasiness or Fatigue, through the whole vast Length of their Journey; but this Construction is plainly repugnant (*t*) to the Scripture-Account we have of their Travels, and therefore the easier Interpretation will be, if, by Way of *Metonymy*, we take the *Shoe* for the *Foot*, and so make the latter agree with the former Part of the Verse, and bring the whole to this Meaning, *viz.* "that, as
" their Cloaths, which cover'd the whole
" Body, did not become useless through
" Age; so neither did their Shoes decay,
" or burst, or grow out of Shape, (for
" in all these Senses may the original
" Word be taken) though they were
" engag'd in so tedious a March."

It is to be observ'd however, that the *Hebrews* wanted neither Flocks nor Herds in the Wilderness; and the Hangings, and other Works belonging to the *Tabernacle*, sufficiently shew, that they were no Strangers to the Art of Weaving. But, supposing they did not manufacture their own Cloaths, they might however purchase them from the *Arabians*, and other neighbouring Nations, and could therefore be under no Want of a sufficient

Supply of this Kind of Necessaries. And from these Considerations (*u*) a learned Commentator concludes, that the Sense of the Words, *thy Raiment waxed not old upon thee*, must be — That, in the Desarts of *Arabia*, the *Israelites* had so great a Plenty of Cloaths, and so many Changes of Raiment, that they were under no more Necessity to wear them tatter'd, or thread-bare, than if they had liv'd in one of the most plentiful, rich, and Cloth-working Countries. And *thy Feet did not swell*, or grow *callous*, as poor People's Feet are wont to do, when the Soles of their Shoes are worn out, and they forc'd to tread upon the hard Ground; for so it is explain'd in another Place, (*x*) *thy Shoe did not wax old upon thy Foot*, i. e. thy Poverty did not oblige thee to wear thy Shoes (as poor People do) 'till they were old, and grown so very thin, that, in hard and stony Ways, they hurt thy Feet, and made them *swell*. Poverty, we know, necessarily occasions a Meanness of Apparel, but Men of large Fortunes have a Variety of Suits, and commonly cast their Cloaths off, before they are too far worn: And, in like Manner, the *Historian's* Design is (in this Instance of Raiment) to signify to us, that the *Israelites*, while they abode in a barren Wilderness, liv'd like Men of Affluence; (*y*) *for the Lord their God was with them* (as he tells us elsewhere) *and they lacked Nothing*.

BUT how well soever God might provide for the *Israelites* in this, and all other Instances of his *paternal* Care, yet, we cannot think, with some *Predestinarians*, that, like an over-fond Parent, he was blind to their Faults. The Word *Aven*, which we translate *Iniquity*, and the Word *Amal*, which we render *Perverseness*, do both very frequently signify in Scripture the highest Kind of Wickedness, i. e. *Idolatry*; and so the Reason, which *Balaam* assigns, why God had *blest* the *Israelites*, and would not *curse* them, is, that they had not as yet incurr'd the Sin of *Idolatry*.

From Numb.
xviii. to the
End of Deute-
ronomy.

The Meaning
of God's seeing
no Iniquity in
Jacob.

(t) Vid. Deut. viii. 4. and xxix. 5.
(y) Deut. ii. 7.

(u) Le Clerc's Comment. in Deut. viii. 4.

(v) Deut. xxix. 5.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.

Idolatry. Some private Men might perhaps be guilty of it, but it was not yet become *National*, and *Epidemical*; nor were there any Hopes, that God would ever deliver them into the Power of their Enemies, unless, some Way or other, they should be seduc'd into that Sin; and therefore *Balaam* advis'd the Prince of *Moab*, by the Allurements of some beautiful Women, to entice them into it, as the likeliest Way to deprive them of the divine Protection.

OTHERS take the Words in a common Sense, to denote *Sin*, or *Wickedness* in general; but then, by the Words *see*, or *behold*, they understand such an Observation of this Wickedness, as marks it out for Punishment. According to this Observation, they make the Meaning of the Phrase to be, that, "tho' the *Israelites* " were confessedly guilty of many great " Crimes, yet, since they were not *universally* so, God wou'd have more Regard to his own Promises, than to the " Sins of some Particulars; because he " is a God of perfect Veracity, and the " Unbelief and Impiety of *ill* Men shall " not have Force enough with him, to " recal and annul his Promises to the " Good."

THERE is another Signification of the Word, which we render *behold*, and that is, to *look upon with Pleasure and Approbation*: And (z) therefore, as the Particle *Beth* does frequently signify *against*, as well as *in*, (and (a) so occurs in several Parts of Scripture) the Sense of the Words will naturally run thus, *God does not approve of any wicked Designs, or Practices against Jacob*; for the Words, which we render *Iniquity* and *Perverseness*, do equally signify *Outrage* or *Oppression*, *Deceit*, or *Machinations* of any Kind, which God declares he would not suffer to be attempted against his People. And therefore *Balaam*, upon a Review of the many Blessings and Deliverances, which God had vouch-

saf'd them, breaks out into this Reflection, and therewith concludes his *prophetick* Speech: (b) *Behold the People shall rise up as a great Lion, and lift up himself as a young Lion; he shall not lie down, until he eat of the Prey, and drink of the Blood.*

THUS, in what Sense soever we take the Words, whether as relating to *Idolatry*, of which the *Israelites*, in the main, were not at that Time guilty; or to *Wickedness* in general, which God's Promises to the Forefathers restrain'd him from punishing, tho' they might be guilty; or to the evil Designs and Practices against his People, which his Justice and Goodness both oblig'd him to disapprove; we shall have no Reason to accuse him of a blind Partaility towards them, but much, very much, to cry out with the inspir'd Writers, (c) *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and true is thy Judgment*; (d) *with the Holy, thou shalt be holy; and with the upright Man, thou shalt be perfect*; for the *Lord knoweth who are his, and can rightly distinguish between those that serve him, and those that serve him not.*

OF the Number of *those, who served* Balaam's Character, and that he was a real Prophet. *not God, Balaam* was certainly one; and yet we have Reason to presume, that he nevertheless was a *real* Prophet. The *Jews* indeed are generally of Opinion, that he was a busy and pretending *Astrologer*, who, observing when Men were under a bad Aspect of the Stars, pronounc'd a Curse upon them; which sometimes coming to pass gain'd him, in some neighbouring Nations, a Reputation in his Way. Several of the antient Fathers suppose him to be no more, than a common Soothsayer, (for so he (e) is call'd) who undertook to foretel future Events, and discover Secrets, &c. but by no good and justifiable Arts. *Origen* will needs have it, that he was no *Prophet*, but only one of the *Devil's* Sorcerers; and that of him he went to enquire, but God was pleas'd to prevent

(z) An Essay towards a new Version of the Scripture. 1.—xxiii. 23, & *alibi*. (b) Numb. xxiii. 24. (c) Psal. cxix. 137. (d) Psal. xviii. 25. (e) Numb. xxii. 5. and Josh. xiii. 22.

(a) Vid. Exod. xiv. 25.—xx. 16. Numb. xii.

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prevent him, and * to put what Answers he pleas'd into his Mouth. It cannot be deny'd however, but that (f) the Scripture expressly calls him a *Prophet*; and therefore some later Writers have imagin'd, that he had been once a good Man, and a true Prophet, till, *loving the Wages of Iniquity*, and prostituting the Honour of his Office to Covetousness, he apostatiz'd from God, and, betaking himself to *idolatrous Practices*, fell under the Delusion of the *Devil*, of whom he learnt all his *magical Enchantments*; tho', at this Juncture, when the Preservation of his People was concern'd, it might consist with God's Wisdom to appear to him, and vouchsafe his Revelations.

BALAM indeed was a Man of no great Probity, and might by Profession be a *Diviner*; but, by the free Access he had to God, it seems to be apparent, that he was no common *Sorcerer*, or Prophet of the Devil: For did ever any Sorcerer address his Prayers to the Supreme God, and receive Answers and Instructions from him? Did ever any Sorcerer prescribe a Law to himself, *to say nothing, less or more*, than what the Spirit of God should dictate? The Spirit of God, when did it ever come upon an *Enchanter*? Or was it ever known, that an Oracle, upon a remote Event, and what God alone was capable of revealing, should be declar'd by a mere *Magician*?

WHEN God was pleas'd to give Answers to his Enquiries, to make his Angel appear to him, and, to put the Word of *Prophecy* in his Mouth, on all these Occasions, we find him expressing no Surprise at all, as if he had been perfectly well acquainted with these several Ways of divine Communication; and therefore, bad

as he was, and a Slave to his Passions, he must nevertheless be deem'd a true Prophet of God. The only suspicious Passage in his Conduct, is, his having Recourse to *Enchantments*; for (g) *what Concord hath God with Belial*? Or what Service could he possibly promise himself by making Use of these? But to this it may be reply'd, that (h) the Arts of *Magicians*, and their Incantations to procure Oracles, and Prodigies, were, by the greatest Philosophers of these Times, held in great Veneration, and by them reputed to be true. Tho' therefore this *Balaam* was really a Prophet, yet, as a Man of Learning, he might not be a Stranger to the *Theory* of what human Science, and the then reputed natural Knowledge had advanc'd upon these Subjects: And as *Saul*, tho' he had before (i) *put away those that had familiar Spirits, and the Wizards out of the Land*; was yet induc'd, when the Lord answered him not, neither by Dreams, nor by Urim, nor by Prophets, to go to a Woman, that had a familiar Spirit, and inquire of her; so *Balaam*, finding nothing but a full Disappointment in all his Views, in the several Revelations, which God was pleas'd to make to him, and being warmly inclin'd to purchase (if he might with any Colour be able to do it) the Advancement, which *Balak* had offer'd him, was tempted to try what might be the Event, if he us'd some of the Arts, which most learned Nations held in the highest Repute, and esteem'd to be of the greatest Efficacy: He try'd, but found (k) *no Enchantment against Jacob, nor any Divination against Israel*.

To enter therefore into the Character of this true *Prophet* and *Enchanter* both, we must observe, 1st, That before the Giving

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xviii. to the
End of Deute-
ronomy.

The Oddness of
his Character
and Behaviour
accounted for.

* To this Purpose *Philo*, in his Life of *Moses*, brings in an Angel discoursing with *Balaam* to this Effect. "It will be in vain for you to contend, for I, without your Privy or Knowledge, will guide the Organs of your Mouth, and make you speak what upon this Occasion is fit and proper. I will direct your Speech, and cause you to utter Prophecies, tho' you know nothing of the Matter." Several Passages to the same Purpose are likewise to be found in *Josephus*, (Antiq. Lib. iv. c. 7.) though there is no Foundation for them in what *Moses* tells us concerning these Adventures of *Balaam*.

(f) 2 Pet. ii. 16.
xxviii. 3, &c.

(g) 2 Cor. vi. 15.
(h) Numb. xxiii. 23.

(i) *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. III. Lib. xii.

(k) 1 Sam.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.

of the Law, and the Conquest of the promis'd Land, there were other † true Worshippers of God, besides the Descendants of *Abraham*, dispers'd over the Face of the Earth. 2dly, That this Worship of God † was frequently mix'd with Superstition and Idolatry, even among them, who profess'd to adore that one God of Heaven and Earth. 3dly, That this odious Mixture did not hinder God † from revealing himself to those, who practis'd such a monstrous and motly Religion. 4thly, That *supernatural* Gifts in general, and those of *Prophecy* in particular, tho' they enlighten'd the Minds of the Prophets, yet, * many Times, did not sanctify their Hearts and Affections. And, 5thly, That the greatest Weakness or Wickedness of Prophets never went so far, as to make them pronounce Oracles, contrary to what was dictated to them by the Spirit of God: (l) *If Balak would give me his House full of Silver and Gold, I cannot go beyond the Word of the Lord, to do either good or bad of my own Mind, but what the Lord saith, that must I speak.*

It is not to be question'd therefore, but that *Balaam* was conscious of his own Inspiration, and did knowingly obey the divine Will; but still he could have wish'd, for *Balak's* Sake, as well as his own, that he might have been permitted to pronounce different Things, to what he did; even as the Prophets of *Israel*, in future Ages, when order'd to denounce Judgments against the People, would have desired Liberty, no doubt, to prophesy Things of a more grateful Relish; but as they could not have that Permission, they obey'd, (tho' with some Reluctancy) and, when they came to the Point, did never-

theless pronounce boldly what they were order'd to promulge.

AND this, by the Way, will, in some Measure, account for the odd Mixture in *Balaam's* Behaviour, viz. his seeking for *Enchantments* in one Minute, and falling into a *Fit of Devotion*, in the next. For besides that the Words, which he utters upon this Occasion, are not properly his own, but infus'd into him by the Spirit of God, and for which, consequently, he is not responsible; to hear a wicked Man sometimes come out with a pious *Wish*, or holy *Ejaculation*, can be no incongruous Thing at all. (m) The Character of Virtue is so very beautiful, its End is so comfortable, and the Odour of its Memory so sweet, that even wicked Men cannot see and hear it, without secretly preferring it, and inwardly fighting for it, and wishing at least that it were their own: And therefore it is no Wonder, that even *Balaam*, under some sudden Compunction of Mind, or Conviction of the Amiability and happy Estate of Virtue, both here and hereafter, should desire to *die the righteous Man's Death*. But there is something more to be said for *Balaam* in this Respect, than for other wicked Men; and that is, the Business he was now about. The whole Series of his Behaviour indeed shews him to be a vain, ostentatious Man. By the Preamble to his Prophecies, (n) *Balaam, the Son of Beor, hath said, and the Man whose Eyes are open, who knew the Knowledge of the Most High, and saw the Vision of the Almighty, hath said, &c.* he would make us believe, that he was a Man of no small Consideration, vastly familiar with God, and * quite superior to the little Pretenders of his Age; and, as we may farther observe, that, in

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† Thus *Job* and his Friends dwelt in *Arabia*; *Jethro* and his Posterity, in the Country of *Midian*; and *Abraham's* Abode in *Mesopotamia* (where *Balaam* liv'd) might leave behind him some *Profelytes* to the true Religion.

† The *Teraphim* of *Laban* proves this.

† *Abimelech*, and *Nebuchadnezzar* are Instances of this, *Gen. xxvi.* and *Dan. ii. 1.*

* For so we read, *the Heads of God's People judge for Reward, and the Priests thereof teach for Hire, and the Prophets thereof divine for Money*, *Mic. iii. 11.*

(l) *Numb. xxii. 38.*

(m) *Young's Sermons, Vol. II.*

(n) *Numb. xxiv. 15, 16.*

* The *Jerusalem Targum* paraphrases *Balaam's* Words in a Manner, that shews his Ostentatiousness: *The Man said, who was honoured above his Brethren, to whom that was revealed, which was hidden from all the Prophets.* *Patrick's Commentary, on Numb. xxiv. 3.*

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all his Intercourse with *Balak*, he never pretended to consult any but God, we cannot but think, that, to seem to be in earnest about the Matter, and now and then drop a *religious* Sentence, was no more, than what became the Business he was upon, and the Character he thought proper to assume, even supposing the Words to have been of his own Invention, which (as we said before) were of divine Inspiration.

The Application of his famous Prophecy.

OF all the Prophecies, which God at this Time deliver'd from the Mouth of *Balaam*, there is one of a more eminent and peculiar Nature: (*o*) *I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall arise out of Israel, and shall smite the Corners of Moab, and destroy all the Children of Seth.* All Opinions agree in this, that *Balaam* here speaks of a King and Conqueror; and perhaps, in calling him a *Star*, he accommodates himself to the long-establish'd Notion, * that the Appearance of *Comets* denoted, either the Exaltation, or Destruction of Kingdoms: But the great Question is, of what King or Conqueror is it that he speaks?

(*p*) SOME have apply'd the Prophecy entirely to *David*, the most illustrious of the *Jewish* Monarchs, who extended his Conquests far and wide. (*q*) Others have apply'd it as entirely to the *Messiah*, supposing that the Metaphor of a *Star* comports better with him, and his celestial Origin, than with *David*; and that the main Strokes of the Prophecy resemble an *heavenly*, more than an *earthly* Conqueror.

The Matter however may be compromised, if we will but allow (*r*) of a learned Man's Observation, *viz.* that the most remarkable Prophecies in the Old Testament bear usually a twofold Sense; one relating to the Times before the *Messiah*, and the other, either fulfill'd in the Person of the *Messiah*, or in the Members of his Body, the Church, of which Kind we may justly esteem the preceding Prophecy. For tho' its primary Aspect may be towards *David*, yet whoever considers it attentively shall perceive, that its Ideas are too full to extend no farther, and must therefore, in a *secondary*, and more exalted Sense, refer us to Christ, *whose Kingdom ruleth over all, and to whom all Things are put in Subjection under his Feet.*

IN this Sense the generality of *Jews*, as well as *Christians*, have all along understood it; and 'tis no improbable Conjecture (* whatever some may think of it) that by the Strength of this Prophecy, kept upon Record among the *Oriental Archives*, the *Magi* of that Country, at our Saviour's Nativity, were directed to *Jerusalem*, and enquir'd, (*s*) *where is the King of the Jews, for we have seen his Star in the East?* And, upon a farther Supposition, that these very *Magi* were descended from *Balaam* in a direct Line, he might then, with Propriety enough, pronounce of the *Messiah*, *I shall see him, i. e. see him in my Posterity, but not now; I shall behold him, but not near.*

THE Promise, or Prediction, which God orders *Moses* to make to the *Israelites*, is this. (*t*) *I will raise them up a Prophet, from among their Brethren, like unto*

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And that of Moses.

(*o*) Numb. xxiv. 17.

* *Justin*, in his History, speaking of *Mithridates*, tells us, that in the several Years of his Birth, and Accession to his Kingdom, a *Comet* shone with such a Lustre, as if the whole Heavens had been a-fire. Lib. xxxvii. c. 2. *Lucan*, in the Description which he gives us of the Civil Wars of Rome, among the several Prodigies, which were seen both on Earth and in Heaven, reckons up this: —

Crinemque timendi
Syderis, & Terris mutantem Regna Cometem.

Lib. i.

And *Diodorus Siculus* delivers it, as a Doctrine current among the *Chaldeans*, that the Rising of *Comets* is either beneficial or hurtful, not only to Nations and States, but even to Kings themselves, and sometimes to private Persons. Lib. ii. p. 116.

(*p*) *La Clerc's* Commentary, on Numb. xxiv. (*q*) *Patrick's* Commentary, ibid. (*r*) *Gratius*, in Matt. i. 22.

* *Justin* in his Miscel. Sacra, Lib. i. c. 16. seems to explode this Conjecture of *Origen's*, but not upon sufficient Grounds.

(*s*) Matt. ii. 2.

(*t*) Deut. xviii. 18.

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unto thee, and will put my Words in his Mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I command him. Now, in order to discover, wherein the Similitude between Moses and this Prophet was to consist, we must enquire into the Particulars, that distinguish'd Moses from the rest of the Prophets; and, accordingly, we find God himself, upon a small Sedition, that Aaron and his Sister were engag'd in ~~him~~ against him, making this Declaration in his Favour; (u) *If there be a Prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a Vision, and will speak unto him in a Dream; but my Servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all his House, with him will I speak Mouth to Mouth, very apparently, and not in dark Speeches: And what he means by speaking apparently, we find explain'd, when we are told, that (x) the Lord spake to Moses Face to Face, as a Man speaketh to his Friend.* This was the distinguishing Character of Moses, and in this Particular neither Joshua, nor any of the succeeding Prophets could pretend to be like unto him. They never saw God's glorious Presence, nor heard him speak distinctly. He did not converse familiarly with them, but whatever he had to communicate, he did it by Way of Visions, or Dreams, or some dark and enigmatical Expressions.

(y) THEY indeed had no special Commission, no new Institutes of Religion to publish, nor had they usually any extraordinary Credentials to produce. Their Business, in short, was, to explain and inculcate the Law, which Moses gave, and even in this it is hardly supposable, that they were always infallibly directed, because it is said of several of them, that (z) *they erred in Vision, and stumbled in Judgment.* So that with no Propriety can it be affirm'd of them that *they were like Moses*, much less can that additional Character belong

to them, *I will put my Words in his Mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him*, which certainly implies an extraordinary Commission to publish something, that was not reveal'd before.

BUT now, when it is said of the blessed Jesus, that he was (a) *a Teacher sent from God*, for that *no Man could do the Miracles*, which he did, *except God were with him*; that he came (b) *to declare God*, or (what is all one) to reveal a new Religion, (c) *which was confirmed by Signs, and mighty Wonders*; and, to qualify him for this, that he (d) *was from the Beginning with God*, and (e) *is in the Bosom of the Father*: When it is expressly said, that he is (f) *the Mediator of a new Covenant in his Blood, for the Redemption of the Transgressions of the former Covenant*; and (g) *as Moses was faithful in all his House, as a Servant, for a Testimony of those Things which were to be spoken after*; so he, as a Son, *was faithful to him, that appointed him, and was counted worthy of more Glory, than Moses, in as much as he, who hath built the House, hath more Honour, than the House.* When all this, I say, is affirm'd, and verify'd of Christ, it is manifest, that the great Lines of the prophetic Description, we are now considering in their true and primary Sense, meet only in him, who is the express Image of his Father, (b) *in whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom, and Knowledge.* But to return to Balaam.

WHATEVER Opinion we may have of the Matter, 'tis certain, that some of the wisest Nations among the Heathens had a great Conception of the Power of their Prophets, and thought that they were Persons in high Favour and Esteem with their Gods, who were always inclineable to listen to, and ratify either their Benedictions or Execrations. * The Imprecations of these Men (as (i) Plutarch informs

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(u) Numb. xii. 6, &c.

(x) Exod. xxxiii. 11.

Religion.

(z) Isa. xxviii. 7.

(a) John iii. 2.

(y) Sykes's Essay upon the Truth of the Christian

(b) John i. 18.

(c) Acts ii. 22.

(d) John i. 2.

(e) Ver. 18.

(f) Heb. viii. 6.

(g) Heb. iii. 2, &c.

(h) Col. ii. 3.

(i) In Vita Crassi, p. 553.

* The Romans were of Opinion, that, by a certain Form of Imprecation, they could demolish Towns, and defeat whole Armies of their Enemies; and what the usual Form for this Purpose was, Macrobius has taken care to leave us in

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informs us) were by the Romans held so very efficacious, that whoever was under them, could not possibly escape; and therefore we need not wonder, that, in Conformity to this Custom, we find *Balak* sending for *Balaam* to come and curse the Israelites for him, since it was his settled Persuasion, (k) that he whom he blessed, was blessed, and he whom he cursed, was cursed.

Balaam's
Wickedness;
God's Anger
at him, but
Wisdom in per-
mitting him to
go.

BUT, tho' *Balak* acted according to the prevailing Prejudices of that Age in sending for *Balaam*, yet God had sufficient Reason to be angry with him for going. He had once consulted God about cursing the People of *Israel*, and had receiv'd a very full and preremptory Answer forbidding him to go about it; *Thou shalt not curse the People, for they are blessed.* This Reason however he kept to himself; for had he communicated it to the Ambassadors at first, in all Probability, they would not have importun'd him anew to go: But his Covetousness urg'd him on, and the rich Presents and Promises, which the Messengers the second Time brought, began to operate so very powerfully, that he forgot his Reverence to the divine Majesty, and presum'd once more to consult him about going.

UPON this Occasion the sacred Historian relates the Matter thus, — (l) *And God came unto Balaam at Night, and said unto him, If the Men come to call thee, rise up and go with them: And Balaam rose up in the Morning, and saddled his Ass, and went with the Princes of Moab, and God's Anger was kindled because he went.* What, angry for what himself commanded him to do? (m) Our Translators indeed thus render the Text,

but the Hebrew Words are clear of this Absurdity; for they tell us, that God's Anger was kindled, not *ci balak*, because he went, but *ci balak hua* because he went of himself, i. e. without staying for *Balak's* Messengers to come in the Morning to call him. He had told them over Night, that an *House full of Silver and Gold*, could not tempt him to go counter to what God should direct him to do; and by this vaunting Speech they very possibly might think their Master's Offers neglected, and be tempted to go away next Morning without him; but so full were his Head and Heart of Expectations from the Journey, that he would not run the Hazard of their calling; but rose up early in the Morning, went himself to them, which was acting directly contrary to God's express Order, for which Reason he sent his Angel to stand in his Way for an Adversary against him. By the Mouth of his Angel however, God permitted him to go, as knowing very well that his Journey would tend to his Confusion, and the Manifestation of his People's Glory. For, though there was nothing but Malice in the Prophet's Heart, and a fix'd Determination to do all the Harm he could to the *Israelites*; yet God, by his over-ruling Providence, directed his Words so, as to make them, upon every Essay to curse, pregnant with Blessings. Had not God forbidden the Prophet to go upon his first Application for Leave, he had not declar'd his Aversion to *Balak's* wicked Project: Had he not allow'd him to go upon his farther Importunity, he had not expos'd his Folly and Madness, as well as the Weakness of his magical Arts, so effectually: But now, in the wise Method which

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ronomy.

in these Words. *Dis Pater, sive Jovis mavis, sive quo alio Nomine fas est nominare; ut omnem illam Urbem, Exercitumque, quem ego me sentio dicere, Eugã, Formidine, Terrore, complectis; quique, adversus Legiones, Exercitumque nostrum, Arma, Telaque ferunt, uti vos eos Exercitus, eos Hostes, eosque Homines, Urbes, Agrosque eorum, & qui in illis Locis, Regionibus, Agris, Urbibusque habitant, abducatis, Lumine supremo privetis: Exercitibusque Hostium, Urbes, Agrosque eorum, quos me sentio dicere, uti vos eas Urbes, Agrosque, Capita, Astatessque eorum Devotas, Consecratasque habeatis, illis Legibus, quibus quandoque sunt maxime Hostes devoti: Eosque ego Vicarios, pro me, Fide, Magistratuque meo, & Populo Romano, Exercitibus, Legionibusque nostris, do, devoveo, ut me, meamque Fidem, Imperiumque, Legiones, Exercitumque nostrum, qui in his Rebus gerundis sunt, bene salvos finatis esse. Si hæc ita faxitis, ut ego sciam, sentiam, intelligamque, tum quisquis votum hoc faxit, rectè factum esto, Ovibus atris tribus, Tellus Mater, Teque, Jupiter, obtestor. Saturn. l. iii. c. 9.*

(k) Numb. xxii. 6.

(l) Numb. xxii. 20, &c.

(m) Shuckford's Connection, Vol. III. lib. xii.

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which he took, he defeated the Designs of the Wicked, and *made the Wrath of Man to praise him*; he hath shewn us, that no *Enchantments*, no *Machinations* can prevail, where he undertakes to protect; and (n) has left us this Lesson of Instruction, “that when Men are foolish and self-willed, and, in the Pursuit of their corrupt Views, will follow their own Ways, notwithstanding many kind Hints and Admonitions to the contrary; God then abandons them to their own Imaginations, which, in the Event, very frequently prove their Ruin.”

How God
might make
Balaam's Ass
speak.

It cannot be deny'd indeed but that God gave *Balaam* sundry Admonitions, not to follow, in this head-strong Manner, the Pursuit of his Avarice. His enjoining him not to go, when the Princes of *Moab* first came for him; his sending an Angel in the Road to rebuke him for his rash and unadvis'd Proceeding; and, when he was come to *Balak*, his over-ruling his Words upon three different Attempts, and making him pronounce what was least of all his Intention, were sufficient Remembrancers, that *his Way* could not possibly be *right before God*. But of all others, the speaking of his Ass was such a miraculous Incident, as would have made any considering Man, one would think, retract his Purpose.

This indeed is so wonderful an Instance, that several of the *Jewish* Doctors, who, upon other Occasions, are fond enough of Miracles, seem as if they would hardly be induc'd to assent to this. *Philo*, in his *Life of Moses*, passes it over in Silence; and (o) *Maimonides* pretends, that it only happen'd to *Balaam* in a *prophetic Vision*. An inspir'd Writer in the *New Testament* assures us, that it was real Fact, as *Moses* relates it. *Moses* says, that *the Lord open'd the Mouth of the Ass, and she said unto Balaam*; and *St Peter* tells us, that the *Ass, speaking with Man's Voice, forbade the Madness of the Prophet*; an human

Voice came out of the Mouth of the Ass; but I do not apprehend, that this Voice proceeded from her own Sentiments. Her Tongue was miraculously mov'd, not by any Power of her's, so to move it, and it spake what it was mov'd to utter, without any Connection of her Words and Sentiments, and without her understanding the very Words she utter'd upon this Occasion. This seems to have been the Fact, and the severest Philosophy, I hope, cannot deny, that God is as able to make Creatures, destitute of Understanding, pronounce articulate and *rational* Words, as it is for a *Musician*, by the different Touches, he gives any Instrument, to make it express a Variety of Notes.

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It may seem a little strange indeed, that *Balaam* should shew no Kind of Surprise, when he heard his Ass speak like an human Creature: But to this (p) some reply, That *Balaam* might probably have imbibed the Doctrine of *Transmigration of Souls*, (which was certainly very common in the *East*) and from thence might be less astonish'd to hear any Brute speak; whereas (q) others suppose, that he was in such a Rage and Fury at the suppos'd Perverseness of his Beast crushing his Foot, and falling down under him, that, for the present, he could think of nothing else; tho' the Conciseness of *Moses's* Narration, that must be presum'd to have omitted many Circumstances, which, if rightly known, would dispel this, and many more Difficulties, that may be imagin'd in this Transaction, does certainly furnish us with a better and more satisfactory Answer. For, (r) tho' we could not assign a sufficient Reason, why God thought fit to work this Miracle, yet who shall therefore dare to infer that it was never wrought? The Account, which we have here even of the most ancient Times, is very short; nor can we rightly form a Judgment what the prevailing Sentiments of the World might be, in the Age, when *Balaam* liv'd. The Counsels

Why Balaam
might not be
astonish'd at it.

(o) Scripture Vindicated, Part II.
(q) Vid. *Patrick's* Commentary in Locum.

(o) More Nevoch. Part II. c. 24.
(r) *Le Clerc's* Commentary in Numb. xxiii.

(p) Vid. *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

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of God are likewise a *great Deep*, nor can any Man so far penetrate into them, as to pronounce what is proper or improper for him to do. Upon this Occasion, however, there seems to be some Reason for his giving the Ass the Faculty of Speech, *viz.* that thereby he might convince the Princes of *Moab*, (who are suppos'd to be in Company with *Balaam*) how easy a Thing it was for him, who had *open'd the Mouth* of this dumb Creature, to stop *that* of its Owner, or to direct his Words to what Purposes he pleas'd; and (*s*) how weak and impotent was the Man, in whom they confided, when, with all his Curses and Imprecations, he could not get the better of a poor Brute, and much less then of the People, so immediately under the divine Protection.

How Balaam
came to be
slain among
the Midia-
nites.

THE Scripture indeed informs us, that after his fruitless Negotiation with *Balak*, (*t*) he returned to his own Place: And so he might return to *Mesopotamia*, and yet, when he heard of the Success of his Advice against the *Israelites*, and how many Thousands of them had been cut off in Consequence of it, he might go back again to the *Midianites*, in Hopes of obtaining an ample Reward for his Services; or when War was declar'd against them, the *Midianites* themselves might possibly send for him again, and he be the rather inclin'd to go, because now he might have some Hopes of cursing the *Israelites* with Success, since they had apostatiz'd from the Worship of their God, and fallen into Idolatry, which while they stood clear of, he knew he could not be permitted to do; and 'tis not unlikely, that for this Purpose he was carry'd into the Field of Battle, and there became a Sacrifice to his own evil Policy.

In what Sense
God is said to
swear.

IT is a sad Perversion of the Sense of Scripture, when God, in Condescension to our Capacities, is pleas'd to make use of human Words and Phrases, to account that Condescension, not only an Impropriety of Speech, but a Disparagement

likewise to the divine Nature and Perfections. The Scripture indeed makes mention of God's *swearing in his Wrath*; but who would ever think, that the Form of this Expression should give any Disgust, or (*u*) the Sense of it be thought repugnant to the *natural* Notions we have of God? He that at all considers the End and Intent of an Oath, must allow it to be a solemn *Asseveration*, made as strong and binding as possible, in order to beget Faith and Confidence in others, or to procure a sure Belief of what is so affirm'd. When Men swear, nothing can make their *Asseveration* so strong and binding, as the Invocation of God to be their Witness, or Avenger: And, in like Manner, when God himself is said to *swear*, we are to suppose, that he enforces and strengthens his *Asseveration* as much as possible, or as much as is proper, to beget the highest Truth and Confidence in his Revelations, not by invoking a *Superior*, (for that, we may say, is not in his Power) but by condescending to make use of human Forms of Swearing, with such proper Alterations as the Case requires. Thus, when God swears (*x*) by himself, or (*y*) by his great Name, or (*z*) by his Life, or (*a*) by his Right-Hand, or (*b*) by his Holiness, or (*c*) his Truth, or (*d*) his Excellency, or any other of his Attributes or Perfections, the Meaning of these Expressions is much the same, *viz.* that he thereby declares the Thing to be as *certain*, and as surely to be depended on, as his own Being or Attributes are. This, I say, is the whole Purport of the Thing; and God is therefore said to make use of this Manner of speaking, only because it is more awful and solemn, and, consequently, apt to make deeper Impressions, and beget a stronger Confidence in the Hearers, than a naked Declaration can.

'TIS the Manner of the Scripture to ascribe to God *Hands, Eyes, and Feet*, *What by his being wrath.* but the Design is not, that we should believe

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ronomy.

(i) *Bibliotheca Bibl.* in Numb. xxii.

Creation, p. 250.

(b) Amos iv. 2.

(v) Gen. xxii. 16.

(c) Psal. lxxxix. 49.

(v) Ibid. in Numb. xxiv. 14, 25.

(y) Jer. xlv. 26.

(d) Amos viii. 7.

(u) Vid. Christianity as old as the

(κ) Ibid. li. 14.

(a) Isaiah lxii. 8.

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believe that he has any of these Members according to the literal Signification; but only, that he has a Power to execute all those Acts, to which these Members in us are so very subservient. 'Tis the Manner of the same Scripture to represent him as affected with the like *Passions*, that we feel in ourselves, when we are angry or pleas'd, have our Hearts attender'd, or provok'd to Revenge; and yet, upon Reflection, we cannot think, that any of these *Passions* are inherent in the divine Nature, but the Meaning only is, (e) that God will as certainly *punish* the *Wicked*, as if he were inflam'd with the *Passion* of *Anger*, or *Revenge*; and as infallibly *relieve*, or *reward* the *Good*, as we will those, for whom we have tender Compassion, or affectionate Love. So that it is only by Way of *Analogy*, and Comparison, that the Nature and *Passions* of Men are ascrib'd to God; and therefore certainly when he is pleas'd to express himself in Accommodation to our Capacities, (instead of making it a Matter of Cavil, and Reproach) we ought to be thankful for his Condescension, and to interpret his Words in a Sense, suitable to his divine Majesty.

IT cannot be deny'd indeed, but that the utter Extirpation of the *Canaanites* carries a Face of Rigour and Severity, not so very consistent with God's frequent Declarations of his Mercy and Long-suffering; but then it should be consider'd, that as he is full of Lenity and Mercy to those that endeavour to please him, so he has thought fit to declare, with the same Breath, that he will (f) *by no Means clear the Guilty*. Let us then see how the Case stood between God and these Nations, when the *Israelites* were sent to dispossess them.

THERE is no Question to be made, but that most of these People had at first the true Worship of God instituted amongst them, and that their several Progenitors

took Care to leave behind them worthy Conceptions of him; but notwithstanding this, in the Days of *Moses* we find their Notions so corrupted, and all Kinds of Idolatry so publickly establish'd, that the Land is said to have been *defiled with them*, and, like a Stomach overcharg'd with unwholesome Diet, to have *nauseated*, (g) *and spued them up*.

IN denouncing the Sentence of their Excision therefore, (h) *ye shall smite them, and utterly destroy them, and save alive nothing that breatheth*, God intimates the Reason of his Severity by the Enumeration of these Particulars; (i) *ye shall destroy their Altars, and break down their Statues, and cut down their Groves, and burn their graven Images with Fire*: Even the Images of *Chemosh*, and *Peor*, and *Moloch*, and other detestable Idols, to whom they are said to have offer'd human Sacrifices, and to have (k) *made their Seed pass thro' the Fire*. Nor was their Idolatry less provoking, than the Corruption of their *Morals*, since Adultery, and Bestiality of all Kinds, Incest, and all Manner of Uncleaness they both avowedly practis'd, and (l) *took Pleasure in those that did them*.

THE *Midianitish* Women in particular, by prostituting their Bodies, in order to draw the young *Israelites* into Idolatry, had given sufficient Evidence of their incorrigible Attachment to Wickedness, and how impossible it would be for the People, whom God had selected from the rest of the World, to preserve their Integrity, if these, and such like publick Seducers were permitted to live among them; and therefore God assigns this, as another Reason for their Extirpation: (m) *Because thou art an holy People unto the Lord thy God, and he hath chosen thee, to be a special People unto himself, above all People, that be upon the Face of the Earth; (n) therefore shalt thou consume all the People, which the Lord thy God shall deliver into thy Hands; thine Eyes shall have no Pity upon*

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God's Extirpation of the Canaanites vindicated.

(e) Bishop King's Sermon of Divine Pred. vii. 2. and xx. 16. (f) Ibid. vii. 5. (g) Ibid. vii. 16. and Exod. xxiii. 33.

(h) Numb. xiv. 18. (i) Lev. xviii. 21.

(j) Lev. xviii. 28. (k) Rom. i. 32.

(l) Deut. vii. 6.

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upon them, lest they turn thee away from following me, to serve other Gods, which will surely be a Snare unto thee.

Now, if either the incorrigible Wickedness of any People, or the Danger of their corrupting others by their Enticements and bad Examples, may be deem'd a sufficient Reason (as it is in all civil Governments, to cut off *obnoxious* Members) for God to rid himself of any Nation, that has incurr'd his highest Displeasure, the *Israelites*, who were only Instruments in God's Hands, are no more to be blam'd for executing the Almighty's Commands, than the Person, who apprehends a *Malefactor*, and brings him to condign Punishment, is to be thought culpable by the Laws of the Land. And, tho' the *Malefactor* may possibly plead for himself, that he never did the *Apprehender*, or even the Executioner any Wrong; yet this will be of no Weight or Significance to the *Magistrate*, when he calls upon the inferior *Officer* to do his Duty. (o) Do but then allow the high and mighty *Magistrate* of Heaven and Earth as much Right, as his *Deputies* have that act under him, and a Judgment sufficient to determine what concerns the *publick Good*, and then certainly the *Israelites*, acting by his Orders, had at least as clear a Right to destroy the *Canaanites*, as any Executioner can have to take away Life by Command of Authority.

THERE is something perhaps, that we may think more affecting in the Case of the innocent Children, which fell in this common Devastation; but then we are to consider, that as the *Lives of all Mankind are in the Hands of God that gave them*, so may he demand them back again, when, or in what Manner, he pleases; and as well may we quarrel with his Providence, for sending a destroying Angel arm'd with a Famine, a Deluge, or a Pestilence, which sweep away Young and Old together, as we may with his deputing

the *Hebrews* to be the Agents of his high Behests, in a general and promiscuous Slaughter of such Nations, as his divine Justice and Wisdom had predestinated to Destruction.

THE *Jews*, it must be own'd, have several Rules of Life, and Customs peculiar to themselves, and by a rigorous Observance of these, they contracted among other Nations the Character of being a fullen and unfociable People, Haters of the rest of Mankind, and averse to all civil Society and Commerce. Thus *Manetho*, as he is quoted (p) by *Grotius*, lays this heavy Charge upon them, that they would hold no Manner of Correspondence with any Mortal, that was not initiated into their Religion. *Tacitus* says of them, that tho' they are courteous enough to one another, yet they pursue Foreigners with the utmost Rage of exasperated Enemies. And (to name no more) *Diodorus* relates, that they were the only People in the World, who rejected all Commerce and Friendship with Foreigners; and, not only so, but treated them as Enemies. But all this must certainly be a gross Mistake; because the Law of *Moses* expressly commands those, that live under it to do good to Mankind in general; not only to love their Neighbours, (q) but to love the Stranger likewise, and in no Case (r) to vex or oppress him, for this very Reason, because they were Strangers in the Land of Egypt: And therefore *Josephus*, in his Book (s) against *Appion*, tells us, that tho' their Law-giver would not admit those, who came occasionally only to the Solemnities of their Religion; yet, among other Things, these he enjoind as necessary, and almost essential Clauses in his Law; viz. to supply every one with Fire, Water, and Provisions, that was in Want, and to direct the Traveller in the Road; which plainly contradicts the Representation, which the * *Roman Satyrift* thought fit to give of them.

IF

(o) Scripture Vindicated, Part II.
(t) Lib. ii.

(p) Annot. in Deut. vii.

(q) Deut. x. 19.

(r) Exod. xxii. 21.

* Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti,
Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.

Juv. Sat. xiv.

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ronomy.

That the Jews
did not refuse
Commerce with
other Nations.

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IF we consult the Practice of the first Founders of the Jewish Nation, we shall find *Abraham* (t) making an Alliance with *Abimelech*, King of *Gerar*, at *Beer-sheba*, and assisting even the impious *Sodomites*, when he thought them unjustly invaded by their Enemies: We shall find *Isaac* (u) entering into a Covenant with the same, or another King of the same Name at the same Place; and *Jacob* (x) signing Articles of Agreement with *Laban*, his Father-in-Law. Nor can we think, that the Promulgation of the Jewish Ordinances made any Alteration in this Particular, or laid any Restraint upon their Votaries from joining in Treaties of Commerce, or any other Negotiations, that tended to the Benefit of human Society. For, had this been the Case, we cannot conceive how (y) both *David* and *Solomon* could have ventur'd to make a League with *Hiram*, King of *Tyre*, without offending God; which they were so far from doing, that *Solomon* in particular (as (z) the sacred History informs us) was directed by *that Wisdom, which he received from God*, when he made his Confederacy with this *beathen Prince*.

EXCEPTING then those several People, whom God had appointed the *Israelites*, at their Entrance into *Canaan*, to destroy, and some other Kings and Nations afterwards, against whom he had sent out his Prophets, to denounce Vengeance for their sad Impieties, the *Jews* were forbidden to maintain a *civil* Intercourse with none; but on the contrary, were frequently excited to use Kindness and Hospitality to Aliens, as well as others, that all the World might see (as (a) *Josephus* puts the Words into *Solomon's* Mouth, at the Dedication of the Temple) *that the Hebrews were not so inhumane, as to envy Strangers the common Dispensations of the Author and Fountain of all our Happiness.*

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AND, for this very Reason, (b) I am confident, it was, that the *Hebrews* are so often reminded by God of their having been Strangers and Bondslaves in the Land of *Egypt*, that, by their Hospitality, and Charity, they might comfort and relieve those, who were in the like Condition; that (in the Words of the Prophet) (c) *they might draw out their Soul to the Hungry, and satisfy the afflicted Soul; that they might bring the Poor that were cast out, to their Houses; cover the Cold and Naked, and not hide themselves from their own Flesh.* For this Cause are they so frequently call'd upon (in the Words of the same Prophet) (d) *to look unto the Rock whence they were hewn, and to the Hole of the Pit whence they were digged, to look unto Abraham their Father, and to Sarah that bare them; that the happy Change of their Circumstances might beget in them a perpetual Gratitude to their great Benefactor, and the Obscurity of their Origin teach them to be humble.*

'TIS Part of the Admonition of *Moses* to the *Israelites*, (e) *thou shalt remember, all the Way, which the Lord thy God led thee, these forty Years, in that terrible Wilderness, wherein were fiery Serpents, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy Heart, and whether thou wouldest keep his Commandments or no.* What restrain'd the Serpents, which were so numerous in the Wilderness; from stinging the *Hebrews*, was doubtless that great and sovereign Being, who resided in the Pillar of the Cloud, to cover the Camp in their March, and make every noxious Creature flee before them. (f) Several Authors are of Opinion, that the Serpents which bit the *Israelites*, were of the *flying-Kind*, and might be call'd *Fiery*, by Reason of their Colour. *Herodotus* informs us, that *Arabia* produc'd this Sort of Serpents in great Abundance;

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Why they are so often put in Mind of their Bondage in Egypt, &c.

Why the Serpents in the Wilderness, did not hurt the Israelites journey.

(t) Gen. xxi. 22. v. 12.

(u) Ibid. xxvi. 28.

(a) Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2.

(c) Isaiah lviii. 10, 7. lib. xii.

(d) Ibid. li. 1, 2.

(x) Ibid. xxxi. 44.

(b) Vid. Exod. xxii. 21.

(e) Deut. viii. 2.

(y) 2 Sam. v. 11.

(z) 1 Kings

Lev. xxv. 42, 55. and Deut. x. 19.

(f) Shuckford's Connection, Vol. III,

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Abundance; and the Time of the Year, wherein the *Israelites* were under this Calamity, was in the Season, when these Creatures usually are upon the Wing, to visit the neighbouring and adjacent Countries; and might now be directed into the Camp of the *Israelites* as a great Army; (for so God (g) calls *the Locust, the Canker-Worm, the Caterpillar, and the Palmer-Worm, his great Army*) to destroy and depopulate without Controul. For however the Divine Presence had protected them before, the People were now in a State of Rebellion; they were murmuring at the Tedioufness of their Journeyings, and at their Want of Provisions, tho' every Day fed by Providence at the Expence of a Miracle. So that God, being angry with them, had remov'd their heavenly *Safeguard*; and no sooner was it remov'd, but Things were left to their natural Course. The Serpents resum'd their Venom; and, (b) as it was now in the Heat of Summer, when Creatures of this Kind are naturally most poisonous, they rais'd such Sores, and sudden Inflammations wherever they fell, as occasion'd Death in some of the most guilty, and violent Pains in all, until God was pleas'd to provide them with a Remedy of a Nature somewhat extraordinary.

Why God appointed a Brazen Serpent to be erected.

WHETHER the Sight of *Brass* (as some *Naturalists* say) be hurtful or no, in such Cases, this is certainly a Prescription of *Physicians*, that such People, as are bitten with any venomous Beast, should be kept from the Sight of the very Image of the Beast, from which they receiv'd such Hurt: And therefore God might take Occasion, from the Incongruity of the *Means*, to magnify his own Power, making use of this Kind of Remedy, that the *Israelites* might know, and be convinc'd, that both the *Disease* and *Medicine*

came from him. When our blessed Saviour cur'd the blind Man in the Gospel, *he spit on the Ground, and made Clay, and spread it all over his Eyes*, which some Standers-by might be apt to believe was a likelier Way to put them quite out, than to recover them; but when they saw the Thing have its Effect, they glorify'd God, and said, (i) *How can a Man, that is a Sinner, do such Miracles?* Because they could not but perceive, that it was a greater Miracle to work the Cure by *incompetent* or *incongruous* Means, than by none at all. And, in like Manner, if, instead of setting up this brazen Serpent upon a Pole, God had order'd the *Israelites* to apply a Leaf of any common Herb to the Bite of these poisonous Serpents, (as he did *Hezekiah* to (k) *lay a Lump of Figs for a Plaister upon his Boil*) the Cure might have been the same, but then the Singularity of it had not been so remarkable. Men might have imputed it to some secret Virtue in the Plant, which now can be ascrib'd to nothing but the superlative Power of God, who, even by contrary Means, can bring about what Ends he pleases.

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THE Design of those Men however can hardly be good, who, to rob God of the Glory of the Cure, would impute it to some *secret Quality* in the brazen Serpent itself. (l) A *Talisman*, which (according to the common Account) is a certain Piece of Metal, made under the Influence of such and such Planets and Constellations, with a wonderful Power to beget Love, and overcome Enemies; to drive away noxious Animals, and cure Diseases, &c. is a *chimerical* Notion; and, (m) to resemble the Figure, which God appointed *Moses* to set up, to any of these vain Devices, is a Scheme that † deserves our Scorn, more than our Confutation.

And whence it had its Virtue,

(g) Joel ii. 25.

(b) Patrick's Comment. on Numb. xx.

(i) John ix. 16.

(k) Isaiah xxxviii. 21.

(l) Saurin's Dissertations.

(m) Le Clerc's Comment. on the xxist of Numb.

† Sir John Marlbam has collected several Passages from the prophane Writers, which hint at *Charms* and *Enchantments* to cure the bite of Serpents; and he says, the *Hebrews* made use of *Enchantments* for this very Purpose, which Assertion he endeavours to support by a Citation from *Psal. lvi. 4, 5.* by another from *Ecclesiastes, chap. x. 3.* and by a third from *Jeremiah, chap. viii. 17.* and, from the whole of what he offers, he wou'd intimate, that the

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tation. The Author of the *Book of Wisdom*, addressing himself to God, and speaking of the *Israelites*, has imputed the Virtue of this Serpent to its true Cause: (n) *He, that turned himself towards it, was not healed by the Thing which he saw, but by Thee, who art the Saviour of all.* And, accordingly, in the foregoing Verse, he calls it a *Sign, or Symbol of Salvation, to put them in Remembrance of the Commandment of the Law.*

THE only considerable Difficulty in the whole Transaction, is, why God, who had forbidden all Manner of Images, should, on this Occasion, command one to be made. This the *Jewish* Doctors (as † *Justin Martyr* observes in his Days) could give no Account of: But had they known *Jesus Christ*, and him crucified, they might have soon perceiv'd, (o) that God intended it for a *Type* of the Death of Christ, and the Manner, in which he was to die; and that the Effects of the Brazen-Serpent upon them, who look'd on it, did represent the Virtue receiv'd by true Believers from the Death of their Redeemer. For so we find our Saviour himself applying the mysterious Meaning of it; (p) *As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoso believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal Life.*

THUS we have answer'd the several Doubts and Objections, that have been made to that Part of the History of *Moses*, which includes this Period of Time: And if the Attestation of profane Writers may be thought any Confirmation of what has been said, we have the Practice of most subsequent *Law-givers*, in Imitation of this great *Jewish* Leader, pretending to a

Familiarity with some fictitious Deity or other, and thence deriving their Institutions: And whoever compares the sacred and fabulous Account of Things together, will find a near Resemblance between *Aaron* and the heathen *Mercury*; and that, as this false Deity is said to have been an *Egyptian* by Birth, the Messenger and Interpreter of the Gods, and is generally painted with a *Caduceus*, or Wand in his Hand twisted about with Snakes; so *Aaron* was himself born in *Egypt*, and appointed by God to be (q) an *Interpreter* to his Brother *Moses*, and a *Messenger* to *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*, in whose Presence he threw down his *Wonder-working* Rod, and it immediately became a Serpent.

THE whole History of *Balaam* (as *Romantick* as it seems) is still upon Record in the ancient *oriental* Writers, from whence the present *Mahometans* have borrow'd many Things. 'Tis not improbable, that the speaking of his *Ass* gave handle to the Fiction of several other brute Creatures, upon less momentous Occasions, according to their Masters. That the Deserts wherein the *Israelites* journey'd, were infested with Serpents of so venomous a Kind, that their biting was deadly, and above the power of Art to Cure, both *Strabo* and *Diodorus* testify. And (to instance no farther) the Worship of *Æsculapius*, the known God of *Physick*, under the Form of a *Serpent*, and what some late Travellers tell us of the *Indians* carrying about a wreathed Serpent, upon a Pearch, to which they pay their Adorations every Morning, had manifestly their Original from some Tradition or other of this Serpent's Image, which *Moses* was directed to set up. So true is the Character

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ronomy.

Cure of the *Israelites* was not miraculous, but that the Brazen-Serpent was properly a *Charm* for the Calamity, or an *Amulet* for the Distemper; but it would be trifling to refute this Opinion. *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. III. Lib. xii.

(n) *Wisd.* xvi. 7.

† In his Book against *Trypho*, he insists upon this Serpent, as a *Type* of *Christ*, and appealing to the Company, what Reason (exclusive of that) could be given of this Matter, one of the *Jews* confess'd, that he was in the Right, and that he himself had enquir'd for a Reason among the *Jewish* Masters, and could meet with none. *Kiddo's Demonstration*, p. 73.

(o) *Kiddo*, *ibid.*

(p) *John* iii. 14, 15.

(q) *Exod.* vii. 1, 2.

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acter (confirm'd by Testimonies of all Kinds) which the sacred Writers give us of this Moses, the Servant of the Lord,

that, both as the Leader, the Law-giver, and Historian of his People, (r) he was found Faithful in all his House.

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ronomy.

DISSERTATION III.

Of the Profane History, Religion, Government, &c. of such Nations, as the ISRAELITES had Dealings with, during this Period.

TOWARDS the Conclusion of the foregoing Book, we carry'd the Succession of the Egyptian Kings down to the Reign of Amenophis, who (according to the most receiv'd Accounts) was that obstinate Prince, that in Pursuit of the Hebrews, together with all his Army, was lost in the Waves of the Red-Sea: Nor should we, as yet, concern ourselves

any farther with the History of that Nation, but that his Son and Successor, Sesostris, † who liv'd in the Time of the Israelites Peregrination in the Wilderness, and may therefore properly take his Place here, was a Person of so distinguish'd a Character, that, to pass him by in Silence, would be doing an Injury to our Reader.

As

(r) Heb. iii. 5.

† It is a Matter of no small Dispute among Chronologers, in what Time it was this Sesostris liv'd. The seeming Analogy of the Name, makes Sir John Marsham think, that Sesostris was the same with SHISHAK, King of Egypt, who, in the Days of Rehoboam, came up against Jerusalem, and took away the Treasures of the House of the Lord, the Treasures of the King's House, and all the Shields which Solomon had made, &c. 1 Kings xiv. 25, 26. What confirms him in this Opinion, is a Passage in Josephus, wherein he tells us, that God avenged himself upon Rehoboam, by the Hand of Shishak, King of Egypt, concerning whom Herodotus (being mistaken) ascribes what he did to Sesostris, Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 4. But what if, in this Matter, Josephus himself should be mistaken, and not Herodotus? Josephus certainly took his Antiquities from the Records of the Jews, which gave a full Account of what happen'd to Abraham, and his Posterity, both before and after they inherited the Land of Canaan; but gave no Account at all of that Country, while it was in other Hands, and particularly while the Israelites were in the Wilderness: And therefore it is more probable, that Josephus knew of no Conquest of the Land of Canaan by the Egyptians, before the Time of Rehoboam. For when he applies what Herodotus says of Sesostris's setting up several infamous Pillars, to stigmatize the Countries, which he conquered, for Cowardice, to Shishak, after his Expedition against the Jews, he plainly gives us to understand, that he knew of no other Expedition from Egypt against the Land of Canaan before that. And indeed these very Pillars are enough to decide the Matter, that our Sesostris was not Shishak. Shishak made an Irruption into Judea, plunder'd the Temple and the Country, and so went back again into Egypt. Now, had he set up such Pillars, as a perpetual Mark of Infamy upon the Jews, can we imagine, that they would have let them stand, even to be seen in Herodotus's Time, and not immediately pull'd them down upon his Retreat? But, on the other hand, if Sesostris, who succeeded the Pharaoh, who was drowned in the Red-Sea, conquer'd Canaan, and set up such Pillars, there is good Reason to think, that they might continue a long while, because the Canaanites, who were a conquer'd People, dar'd not pull them down in his Reign, and in the Time of the Deputies, who govern'd under him; and the Israelites, who knew, that these Pillars were no Reflection on them, but only on their Enemies, would be inclinable enough to let them stand. It is much more probable then, that the Mistake belongs to Josephus, and not to Herodotus; because Herodotus, in what he asserts of Sesostris, agrees with Diodorus and others: But, to fix the Actions of Sesostris upon Shishak, there is no one ancient Author, that will agree with Josephus. Aristotle affirms, (Polit. lib. i. c. 10.) that the Kingdom of Sesostris was much older, in Point of Time, than that of Minos in Crete, which every one owns was in the Time of Joshua. Pliny maintains, (Nat. Hist. lib. xxxvii. c. 8.) That Troy was taken in the Time of Ramesses, who was the third Descendant from Sesostris. Strabo avers, (Lib. ult.) that Sesostris was long before the Trojan Times; and Sir John Marsham, and, in general, all the Writers of the Argonautick Expedition own plainly, that the Colonies of Sesostris had been at Colchis before that, which all agree to have been a Century before the Fall of Troy. And (if to these we may add two Moderns) both the learned Prelate Usher, and the learned Bishop Cumberland, do unanimously agree, in making Sesostris to be the Son of that Pharaoh, who was drowned in the Red-Sea; which the latter of these has given several Arguments to prove. Sanchez, Page 402. But these the learned Author of the Connection of the sacred and Profane History has endeavour'd to invalidate, and thereupon concludes "That Sesostris shou'd be the Son of Pharaoh, who was drown'd in the Red-Sea, and that in the State, which his Father's Misfortunes must have reduc'd Egypt to, he should immediately find Strength sufficient to subdue Kingdom after Kingdom, and to erect himself a large Empire over many great and flourishing Nations; this must be thought by any one, who duly considers Things, to seem, at first Sight, a most Romantic Fiction. Vol. III. Lib. xi.

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The Life of Se-
sostris.

As soon as *Sesostris* was born, some Historians tell us that *Vulcan* appear'd to his Father in his Sleep, and inform'd him, that *his Son should conquer the whole World*; upon which Presumption it was, that he took so much Care, not of his Education only; but of every male Child's likewise, that was born on the same Day with him, even through all his Kingdom of *Egypt*. The Number of these is said to have amounted to seventeen Hundred in all; and the King gave Orders, that they should be train'd up in the same Discipline, and Exercises, with his Son, as justly supposing, that they, who had been the constant and equal Companions of his Childhood and Youth, would prove his most faithful *Ministers*, and affectionate *Fellow-Soldiers*. (s) Having therefore provided Tutors, and Masters, and every Thing necessary for this Purpose, he had them, by Degrees, inured to laborious and manly Exercises, as well as instructed in all liberal and useful Sciences, that, as they grew up, by the Strength of their *Bodies*, and the Cultivation of their *Minds*, they might be equally fitted either to *command*, or *execute*.

AMENOPHIS, after he had been at this vast Expence and Trouble in laying the Foundation of his Son's future *Grandeur*, resolv'd to give him and his Companions an Opportunity of displaying the good Effects of their Education; and accordingly sent him, and them along with him, at the Head of an Army into *Arabia*. In this Expedition, the young *Sesostris* surmounted all the Dangers of Serpents and venomous Creatures, all the Wants and Hardships of a dry and barren Country, and, in the End, conquer'd the *Arabians*, a rude and barbarous People, that had never been vanquish'd before.

FROM *Arabia* his Father order'd him *Westward*, where he subdu'd the greatest Part of *Africk*; but, while he was engag'd in this Expedition, News was brought him, that his Father, and all his Army, were drown'd in the *Red-Sea*,

which made him desist from his Conquests, and hasten home with his Army, in order to secure his Succession to the Kingdom. Whether it was that he call'd to Mind the Prediction of the God *Vulcan*, or was instructed by *Mercury*, who prepar'd him for the War; was assur'd of Success by Divination, by Dreams in the Temple, or Prodigies in the Air; or perswaded to it by his Daughter *Atbyrte*, a young Lady of uncommon Understanding, and who made it out to her Father, that the Thing was practicable; but so it was, that no sooner was he settled upon the *Egyptian* Throne, but his Thoughts began to swell, and his Mind to grasp at an *universal Monarchy*.

HIS own Country indeed he found but in a lamentable Estate. The *Israelites*, who were their Slaves, were gone: All their veteran Soldiers, with their Arms, Chariots, and Horses, were lost: The First-born of every Family were slain; the Cattle kill'd; the Fruit of the Earth destroy'd; and nothing but Famine was to be expected: And yet, notwithstanding all this Discouragement, he was resolv'd to put in Practice his Scheme for a general Conquest. But then, considering that this would oblige him to be long absent, and far distant from *Egypt*, he could not but deem it necessary to gain the Love and Affection of his Subjects, that these, who follow'd him, might lay down their Lives more chearfully in his Service, and they, whom he left behind, might not be induc'd to attempt any Innovations, while he was gone.

TO this Purpose he endeavour'd, in the first Place, to oblige every one to the utmost of his Power: Some, by Large-ses in Money; others, by Donations in Land; many, by the Concession of free Pardons; and every one by fair Speeches, and a courteous and affable Behaviour upon all Occasions. Those, that were condemn'd for High-Treason, he releas'd with Impunity; and, by paying what they ow'd, discharg'd such, as were in Prison for Debt. In the next Place, he resettled the

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the antient Division of the Country into six and thirty Parts, which the *Egyptians* call *Nomi*, or Provinces; assign'd a Governor to each of these; and constituted his Brother *Armais* (whom the *Greeks* call'd *Danaus*) supreme Regent. Him he invested with ample Power and Authority: But restrain'd him from wearing the Crown, from offering any Injury to the Queen and her Family, and from having any Dealings with the royal Concubines.

HAVING thus settled the Government, he proceeded, in the last Place, to raise an Army equal to the Vastness of his Design, which consisted of 600,000 Foot, 24,000 Horse, and 27,000 warlike Chariots. His principal Officers were taken out of those brave Men, who were train'd up with him in martial Exploits; and, that they might always be in Readiness (without submitting to any mean Employ) to attend him to the Wars, he took Care to bestow on them large Estates in Land, in some of the richest and most fertile Parts of *Egypt*. With this Army he march'd at first against the *Ethiopians*, whom he soon conquer'd, and made them pay him a Tribute of Ebony, Gold, and Elephants Teeth. But his Land Forces alone were not answerable to the Conquests he intended; and therefore he fitted out two Fleets of tall Ships, somewhat resembling our modern Form, one in the *Mediterranean Sea*, and the other in the *Arabian Gulf*. With the *Mediterranean* Squadron he conquer'd *Cyprus*, the Sea Coasts of *Phœnicia*, and several of the *Cyclades*; and from the *Arabian Gulf*, he sail'd into the *Indian Sea*, and there sub-

du'd all the Coasts thereof, till, happening to come into a *shallow*, and his Ships drawing more Water than usual, he either was unable, or afraid to go any farther, and so return'd into *Egypt*.

BUT he had not been long return'd, before his Ambition began to operate afresh; and therefore, advising with his Priests, he recruited his Army, and march'd into *Asia*. The *Israelites* were, at this Time, in the Deserts of *Arabia*; and therefore it may look a little strange, why a Man of *Sesostris's* Spirit should not have been tempted to pursue them. But, besides the Barrenness of the Country, which could never support so vast a Multitude as he carry'd with him, he could not but reflect on his Father's Fate: And therefore dreading the like miraculous Overthrow, he declin'd the *Israelites*, and march'd directly against *Canaan*, which, without the least Opposition, at once submitted to him; so that, imposing an annual Tribute upon the People, and putting Governors in all their principal Towns, he proceeded in the Course of his Conquests, and, in a short Time, over-ran all *Asia*, and some Part of *Europe*.

He pass'd the River *Ganges*, and pierc'd through all *India*, as far as the main Ocean eastward: Then * he subdu'd the *Scythians*, as far as the River *Tanais*, which divides *Europe* from *Asia*: Here he brought into Subjection the other Parts of *Asia*; and from hence he went into *Thrace* in *Europe*; but, as he was marching along the Deserts, he was in Danger of losing his Army through the Want of Provisions, and Difficulty of Passes, and therefore † erecting (as his Custom was) his Pillars there,

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ronomy.

* Tho' *Herodotus*, *Diodorus*, and others do relate, that he was victorious in these Countries; yet some will have it, that he met with a Repulse, fled from the *Scythians*, and was worsted by the *Colchians*. For *Justin* tells us that *Pexoris*, or *Sesostris*, dispatching Ambassadors before him to summon the *Scythians* to surrender, they sent back his Messengers with Contempt, and Threats, and Defiance, and immediately took up Arms; that *Sesostris*, being inform'd that they were advancing towards him by hasty Marches, suddenly turn'd about, and fled from before them, leaving all his Baggage, and warlike Apparel to the Pursuers, who follow'd him, till he came on the Borders of *Egypt*. Lib. ii. Cap. 3. *Pliny* relates, (Lib. xxxiii. Cap. 3.) that he was overthrown by the King of *Colchis*; and *Palerius Flaccus* insinuates, that he was repuls'd with great Slaughter, and put to Flight in these Parts. Argonaut. lib. v.

† It was the Custom of this great Warrior to set up Pillars in every Country he conquer'd, with an Inscription to this Effect, ——— *Sesostris, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, subdued this Country by the Power of his Arms*. If the Nation had, without Opposition, ignobly submitted to him, besides the Inscription, he caus'd the Privileges

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there, he adventur'd to proceed no farther : Tho' the Occasion of his Return may rather be imputed to the News, which he receiv'd from the *Egyptian* High-Priest, of his Brother's Revolt and Usurpation.

FOR, encourag'd with his long Absence, and great Distance, *Armais* had done every Thing, that was interdicted him : Had assum'd the Diadem, violated the Queen, made promiscuous Use of the King's Concubines, and, by the Advice of his false Friends, was now meditating to maintain his Usurpation by Force of Arms : But, hearing of his Brother's Return, he feigns himself of another Temper ; meets him at *Pelusium*, a Frontier-Town, before he could have certain Intelligence of what had pass'd ; and there receiv'd him with all the Appearance of Submission and Joy, but with a real Design, not only to take away his Life, but quite extirpate his whole Family. To this End he invited the King his Brother, the Queen, and her Children, to a Banquet, which he had prepar'd for their Refreshment ; but when they had all drank very plentifully, and were now gone to rest, he caus'd a great Quantity of dry'd Reeds, which he had before prepar'd for that Purpose, to be laid round the King's *Pavilion*, and set on Fire, in hopes to destroy them all. *Sesostris*, perceiving the Danger he was in, and expecting no Assistance from his *Guards*, who were all overcome with Wine, * lifted up his Hands, and imploring the Gods in Behalf of his Wife and Children, he rush'd with them through the Flames ; and, being thus unexpectedly preserv'd, he made Oblations to

several of the Gods, but more especially to *Vulcan*, by whose Protection he thought himself deliver'd. The Traitor *Armais* being thus defeated in his wicked Design, betook himself to Arms ; but was soon discomfitted by *Sesostris*, and forc'd to flee into *Greece*, where he settled at *Argos*, and, not long after, was chosen King ; while his victorious Brother, after nine Years Absence, returning in Triumph into *Egypt*, adorn'd the Temples with rich Spoils : And, having disbanded his Army, after he had rewarded them according to their Merit, he began to apply his Mind to such stupendous Works, as might immortalize his Name, and everlastingly contribute to the publick Good.

HE built a Temple in every City in *Egypt*, and dedicated it to the peculiar God of the Place. This was a Work, wherein he employ'd none but *Captives*, and therefore he had it inscrib'd upon each Temple, *None of the Natives were put to labour here*. He rais'd vast Mounts and Hills of Earth, to which he remov'd the Cities, that had before too low a Situation, in order to secure both Man and Beast from the Danger of the *Nile's* Inundations. All the Way, from *Memphis* to the Sea, he dug Canals, which from the *Nile* branch'd out, and, not only made an easier Conveyance from Place to Place, but greatly advanc'd the Trade and Prosperity of the Kingdom. All the Towns, that were upon the Frontiers, and lay before expos'd to any superior Number of Forces, he fortify'd against the Incursions of Enemies, and made them of difficult Access. He defended the East Side of *Egypt* against

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of a Woman to be carv'd, as a Mark of their *Effeminacy* and *Baseness* ; but if they had defended themselves bravely, the Pillars bore the Distinction of the contrary Sex, in Testimony of their Courage. Besides these, he left Statues of himself behind him, two of which were to be seen in *Herodotus's* Time, one on the Road between *Ephesus* and *Phocæa*, and the other, between *Smyrna* and *Sardis*. They were arm'd after the *Ethiopian* and *Egyptian* Manner ; held a Javelin in one Hand, and a Bow in the other ; and, across the Breast, had a Line drawn, from Shoulder to Shoulder, in which was this Inscription : ——— *This Region I obtained by these my Soldiers*. Universal History, lib. i. c. 3.

* *Herodotus* adds one Circumstance more : That, waking out of Sleep, and finding his Danger, he consulted with his Queen what to do in this Extremity, who advis'd him to throw two of his Children into the Flames, that they might serve as a Bridge for all the rest ; which he accordingly did, and so they all escap'd. But this is generally deem'd a Mistake in our Historian, or a Circumstance crept in, on Purpose to make the Distress appear more affecting. *Dedford's* Scripture-Chronology, lib. iv. c. 5.

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against the Irruptions of the Syrians and Arabians, with a Wall drawn from *Pelusium*, thro' the Defarts, as far as *Heliopolis*, which is at least fifteen hundred Furlongs. He caus'd a Ship of two hundred and eighty Cubits long to be built all of Cedar, gilded over with Gold without, and lin'd with Silver within; and, to perpetuate the Memory of his Actions, he erected two *Obelisks* of polish'd Marble an hundred and twenty Cubits high, on which was inscrib'd an Account of the Extent of his Empire, the Value of his Revenue, and the Number of the Nations, which he had conquer'd. One Thing however is reported of him, which argues an horrid Insolence in so great a Man, and tarnishes his Character not a little, and that is, that, at set Times, his Custom was, to have the *Tributary* Kings, and such as held their Dominions under his Favour, to come into *Egypt*, to pay their Homage; and tho' he receiv'd them at first with all the Signs of Honour and Respect, yet, on certain Occasions, he would have his Horses unharnes'd, and some four, or more of these Kings yok'd together, and made to draw his Chariot: But, bateing this opprobrious Piece of Arrogance, (* and whereof he was cur'd, before he died) he was certainly, in all Respects, the greatest Prince, that ever sat upon the *Egyptian* Throne; and (what some have accounted an Augmentation of his Greatness) after he had reign'd three and thirty Years, he lost his Eye-Sight, and, out of Disgust, laid violent Hands upon himself, thereby making his *Magnanimity* in Death (as they call it) equal to the glorious Actions of his Life.

The History of
the Amale-
kites.

AFTER that the Children of *Israel*

had left the *Egyptians* in the *Red-Sea*, the first People that gave them any Molestation were the *Amalekites*. *Amalek* was the Son of *Elephaz*, by his Concubine *Timna*, as *Eliphaz* was the First-born of *Esfau*. He gave Name both to the People and Country where he liv'd, and, notwithstanding the Spuriousness of his Birth, is, (†) in the Catalogue of Dukes of *Edom*, reckoned as one of them. The Country of the *Amalekites* lay somewhere between *Egypt* and *Palestine*, and was therefore very probably bounded by *Canaan* to the North; by *Egypt*, or its dependent Territories, to the South; by *Edom*, or the Land of *Seir*, to the East; and by the Defarts towards the Sea, or perhaps by the Margin of the Sea itself, to the West.

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ronomy.

THEIR Religion was at first, no doubt, the same that was taught in the House of *Abraham*; but, in Process of Time, they were carry'd away with the general Corruption, and fell into the same Idolatry, that their Brethren the *Edomites* practis'd. And, as to their Commerce or Trade, the Situation of their Country might favour them, as much as their Neighbours, and the Superiority of the Power and Greatness, to which they had advanc'd themselves, looks as if they had improv'd it, more than others.

THEIR Form of Government was *Monarchical*; and, as it appears that the first, (at least, one of the first) and the last of their Kings was call'd *Agag*, 'tis no unlikely Supposition, that all their intermediate Kings bore the same Name. However this be, 'tis certain, that, at this Time, they were a flourishing Nation, and grown up to such a † sudden Height of Power and Grandeur, that their King is

* The Manner in which he was cur'd is said to be this: — One Day, as some of these *Tributary* Kings were drawing him along, he perceiv'd one of them to look back upon one of the Wheels, with a very great Stedfastness; and thereupon enquiring, what might be the Subject of his Thoughts, or the Occasion of his deep Attention, he receiv'd an Answer to this Effect: — The going round of the Wheel, O King, calls to my Mind the Vicissitudes of Fortune: For, as every Part of the Wheel is uppermost and lowermost by Turns, so it is with Men, who, one Day, sit on a Throne, and, on the next, are reduced to the vilest Degree of Slavery. Which Answer struck the King with such Compassion, that, for ever after, he gave off this inhumane Practice. *Diodorus*, lib. i. and *Universal History*, lib. i. c. 3.

(†) Gen. xxvi. 12.

† The Kingdom of *Edom*, commenc'd much about the Time of the *Israelites* Departure out of *Egypt*; and that of *Amalek* could not be much, if any Thing at all, older; and therefore when *Balaam* express'd himself in so high a Strain,

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Ant. Christ. 1489, ^{Æc.} is spoken of, as much superior to any other ; and therefore, when *Balaam* foretels the future Majesty of the *Jewish* State, he expresses himself, *that (t) their King should be higher than Agag*, and stiles them the *first of the Nations*; which seems to countenance the wonderful Things, which the *Arabian* Historians tell us of these People, *viz.* that they once conquer'd *Egypt*, and possess'd the Throne of that Kingdom for several Generations. The Truth is, these *Amalekites* were a bold and daring People from the very first. No sooner had the *Israelites* set Foot upon the *Arabian* Shore, but they conspir'd against them, and, falling on their Rear in their March to *Horeb*, made some Slaughter among them, which *Joshua*, as soon as he had got his fighting Men in Order, took Care to repay; tho' it must be confess'd, that God, for some Time, was pleas'd to make use of this Nation (in Conjunction with some of the *Canaanites*) to *(u) be Scourges in the Sides, and Thorns in the Eyes*, i. e. his Instruments for the Punishment of the Diffidence, and Disobedience of his own People.

Of the Edomites.

ESAU, who, either from the Colour of his Hair and Complexion, or for selling his Birth-right to *Jacob* for a Mess of red Pottage, had the Name of *Edom* given him, was the Progenitor likewise of this People. Their ancient Kingdom, when in its *Meridian*, was bounded on the *North*, by the Land of *Canaan*, and the *Salt-Sea*; on the *South*, by the *Arabian Gulf*; on the *East*, by the Land of *Midian*; and on the *West*, by the Kingdom of *Amalek*: And, in this Compass of Ground, they had several remarkable Cities (besides two eminent Sea-Ports, *Elatb* and *Ezion-geber*) on the *Arabian Gulf*; but the latter of these became so infamous for the many

Wrecks, which befel the Shipping that frequented it, that, in Time, it came to be disused. From Numb. xviii. to the End of Deuteronomy.

THE People were naturally bold and courageous; jealous of their Rights, and always in a Disposition to maintain them; as those, who claim the Empire of the Sea (in the Manner that they did) should always be. As they were descended from *Abraham*, we are not to doubt, but that their Belief and Practice were right at first, though, by Degrees, *(x)* they fell into Idolatry; and if we can suppose, that the Book of *Job* was of as ancient Date as is pretended, and that he himself liv'd among these People, we cannot but acknowledge, that the *(y)* Invention and Use of *Constellations* in *Astronomy*, *(z)* the Art of *Writing*, *(a)* the Art of *Navigation*, and many more Parts of truly useful Knowledge, were begun, and cultivated among them.

THE Form of their *civil Constitution* seems to have varied according to the Exigencies of the Times. The *Horites*, who very early inhabited this Country, were rul'd, at first, by their respective *Patriarchs*, or Heads of Families; *(b)* till, being overcome by *Cberdaloamer*, King of *Elam*, who swept them before him with other Nations, they, to secure themselves for the Time to come, chang'd the Constitution into an *elective* Monarchy; and 'twas under this Form of Government, that *Esau*, and his Family liv'd for some Time *Sojourners* in this Land. The Monarchy however did not last above seven or eight Successions, till, some Way or other, it came to be divided into several little independent *Principalities*, or Dukedoms; and, as the Posterity of *Esau* exceeded all others in the Number of their *Dukes*, it cannot be incongruous to suppose, that

7 I

Strain, concerning *Agag*, and his Monarchy, it could not have been much above forty Years standing. The Expression of *Amalek's* being *the first of the Nations*, our Version turns otherwise in the Margin, *the first of the Nations, that warred against Israel*; and, if we compare what is said of *Agag*, but thirteen Verses before, we shall not be at a Loss for the right, at least for a natural Explication of the Words, *viz.* that they were the greatest, and most noble Nation at that Time; and accordingly *Le Clerc's* Version stiles them, *the first Fruits of the Nations*, by which, in his Commentary, he understands them to have been the most ancient and potent Nation of any of those, which proceeded from the Loins of *Abraham* and *Lot*. Universal History, lib. i. c. 4.

(t) Numb. xxiv. 7. (u) Josh. xxiii. 13. (x) 2 Kings viii. 20. (y) Job ix. 8. (z) Ibid. xix. 24. (a) Ibid. ix. (b) Bishop Cumberland's Orig. Gent. Antiq.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.

that they had the greatest Hand in bringing about this *Revolution*, and the largest Share in the Government, that was founded thereupon.

AND as they had the largest Share in the Government, 'tis not unreasonable to suppose farther, that, in Consequence of their Power, they soon expell'd the *Horite* Dukes, and, at the same Time, might force *Amalek*, or his *spurious* Offspring, to leave their Dominions. For, in the next Generation, the Posterity of *Esau* are stiled *absolute Dukes of Edom*, were only eleven in Number, and in all the Country had no *Rivals*. But, as the Approach of the Children of *Israel* put them, and every Nation else, in a great Consternation, they thought it most conducive to their general Safety, to unite under one common Head; and thereupon having made Choice of a King, they resolv'd to maintain their Ground against any Invasion. 'Twas to this nameless King, or perhaps his Successor, that *Moses* sent Ambassadors, desiring a free Passage through his Country, which he absolutely deny'd, and, to let him see that he was in earnest, immediately took the Field; but as his Design was to act upon the *Defensive* only, and not distress a People, that were his Brethren, in Matters wherein he could relieve them, without Danger to himself, (c) he supply'd them (for their Money) with whatever Necessaries they wanted. And thus far the History of the *Edomites*, during this Period, goes.

Of the Moabites.

MOAB, the Son of *Lot*, by an incestuous Commerce with the elder of his Daughters, was the Progenitor of this People, and gave Name to their Country; which was bounded, on the *East*, by the Deserts of *Arabia*; on the *West*, by the Mountains, that lie *East* from the *Dead-Sea*; on the *North*, by the Country of the *Ammonites*, the Descendants of *Lot* by his younger Daughter; and on the *South*, by the Brook, or little River *Zerid*, which runs into the *Dead-Sea*; so that, in the

whole, it is about forty Miles in *Length*, and as much in *Breadth*. From Numb. xviii. to the End of Deuteronomy.

THAT the People had once the Knowledge of the true God, can hardly be doubted; but, in Time, they lov'd not to retain that Knowledge, but introduc'd the Worship of false Gods, with such monstrous and obscene Ceremonies, as are not fit to be nam'd. Their principal Idols were *Chemosh*, and *Baal-peor*; and to these they sacrific'd, on Mountains dedicated to that Service, and in Temples built in their Cities, not only Oxen and Rams, but, upon extraordinary Occasions, human Victims.

THE Form of their Government was *Regal*, and the first Inhabitants of their Country were the *Emims*, a great and powerful People, of extraordinary Strength and Stature, very probably the Descendants of *Ham*, and of the same gigantick Race with the *Anakims* and *Rephaims*, tho' the *Moabites* call'd them by the Name *Emims*, which, in *Hebrew*, signifies terrible. And too terrible an Enemy had they been for the *Moabites*, had not *Chedorlaomer* and his Allies, by their frequent Incursions, much weaken'd them, and made them an easy Prey. The *Moabites* however, when they had thus dispossest'd them, kept not their new Dominions long entire; for *Sihon*, King of the *Amorites*, who border'd on them eastward, fought against the King of *Moab*, and took from him all his Kingdom to the North of the River *Arnon*.

THE Successor to this King was *Balak*, who was then upon the Throne, when the *Israelites* came, and encamp'd in the Neighbourhood of his Country. His tampering with the infamous *Balaam* was the Reason, why his People were not permitted to mix, or intermarry with the *Hebrews*; but, as the *Midianites* (whose History we are now come to) were more particularly instrumental in seducing them to *Idolatry*, their Punishment, for the present, was more severe.

MIDIAN,

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
Of the Midianites.

MIDIAN, the fourth Son of *Abraham* by his Wife *Keturah*, is generally reputed to have given Name to the Country, and to have been the Progenitor of the *Midianites*, who, in the early Ages of the World, were confounded with (*d*) the *Ishmaelites*, and soon after seem to be conjoin'd with the (*e*) *Moabites*, as if they had been both one Nation; when the true Reason of this seeming Commixture was, that, according as they liv'd to the *northern* or *southern* Parts of the Country, of Course they join'd themselves either to the *Moabites* or *Ishmaelites*; and, upon that Account, are oftentimes promiscuously mention'd in Scripture.

WHAT the Limits of their Country were, 'tis not so easy a Matter to perceive. Its Boundary on the *East* is uncertain, but on the *West* it was contiguous to the Land of *Edom*; on the *North*, to the Country of *Moab*; and on the *South*, to the *Red-Sea*.

ITS Inhabitants were very numerous, and may be distinguish'd into two Sorts, *Shepherds*, and *Merchants*. The *Shepherds* mov'd up and down in *Tents*; they drove their *Cattle* before them, even when they went to *War*; and seem to have had few or no fix'd *Habitations*, except some strong Holds near the Borders of their Country. The *Merchants*, in like Manner, travell'd from Place to Place in Companies, or *Caravans*, (as it is the Custom in those Parts even to this Day) and the only Settlements they seem to have had were their *Marts*, and *Stations*, in Places convenient for their Trade.

By these two different Employes however, the whole Nation flourish'd to a great Degree: The *Merchants* grew excessively rich; and the *Shepherds*, by exchanging with them their *Cattle* for *Gold*, and *Jewels* of all Kinds, were enabled to make a much better Appearance, than other Nations. But, as their Affluence in these Things soon introduc'd *Luxury*, they were a People remarkable for all Kinds of *Vanity*, *Riot*, and *Excess*. Tho' their

Learning could not be great, yet their *Merchants* were oblig'd to know something of *Writing* and *Arithmetick*, in order to keep their Accounts; and as they were *Traders*, and situate on the *Red-Sea*, it can hardly be suppos'd, but that they apply'd themselves to *Ship-building*, in order to explore not only their own Coasts, but those of other Countries likewise, that lay contiguous to them, and consequently could not be without some tolerable Skill in *Geography*, and *Geometry*.

THEIR Religion differ'd, according to the Part of the Country which they inhabited. Those, who liv'd in the *North* of *Midian*, fell into all the Abominations of the *Moabites*, and, in their Endeavour to corrupt the *Israelites*, quite exceeded them: But those, that were plac'd more towards the *South* (if we may take *Jethro*, who is said to have rul'd over a People near the *Red-Sea*, for a Pattern) retain'd just Notions of God, and of the Form of *Worship*, which he had prescrib'd to their Forefathers; for they offer'd up *Praises*, and *Thanksgivings*, and *Sacrifices* to him, tho' their Religious Rites and Ceremonies are not specify'd.

THEIR Form of Government might, in the like Manner, be different, according to the Part of the Country which they inhabited, tho', in the main, it looks as if it had been *Aristocratical*, rather than *Monarchical*. *Jethro* indeed, in our Translation, is call'd a *Priest*; and, because the Word in the Original does equally signify a *Prince*, it has generally been concluded, that he had the Honour of being *both*. Mention is likewise made of other *Princes*; and the five, who fell by the Hand of *Israel*, are sometimes stil'd *Kings*, and sometimes *Dukes* of *Midian*: So that this Nation seems to have been govern'd by a Multitude of *Dukes*, or petty *Princes*, who, perhaps, in their own Jurisdiction, were independent on each other, and yet, some Way or other, were, in *Moses's* Time, (*f*) Feudatory under *Sihon*, King of the *Amorites*. *Sihon* indeed had made

From Numb. xviii. to the End of Deuteronomy.

(*d*) Gen. xxxvii. 25, 28.

(*e*) Ibid. xxxvi. 35.

(*f*) Josh. xiii. 21.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.

made a Conquest from the *Moabites* of the best Part of the Country, he then possess'd, and, having settled himself in their Place, made several of the neighbouring Princes *tributary* to him; but, refusing a Passage to the *Hebrews*, and coming, without † any Provocation, to attack them, he himself was slain, and his whole Army routed; *Heshbon*, his capital City, was taken; and all the rest of his Dominions distributed among the *Israelites*.

THESE were the several Nations, on the *other*, i. e. on the East-side of *Jordan*, which God deliver'd into the Hands of his People; and more we shall have to say of them, as they meet us in our Way.

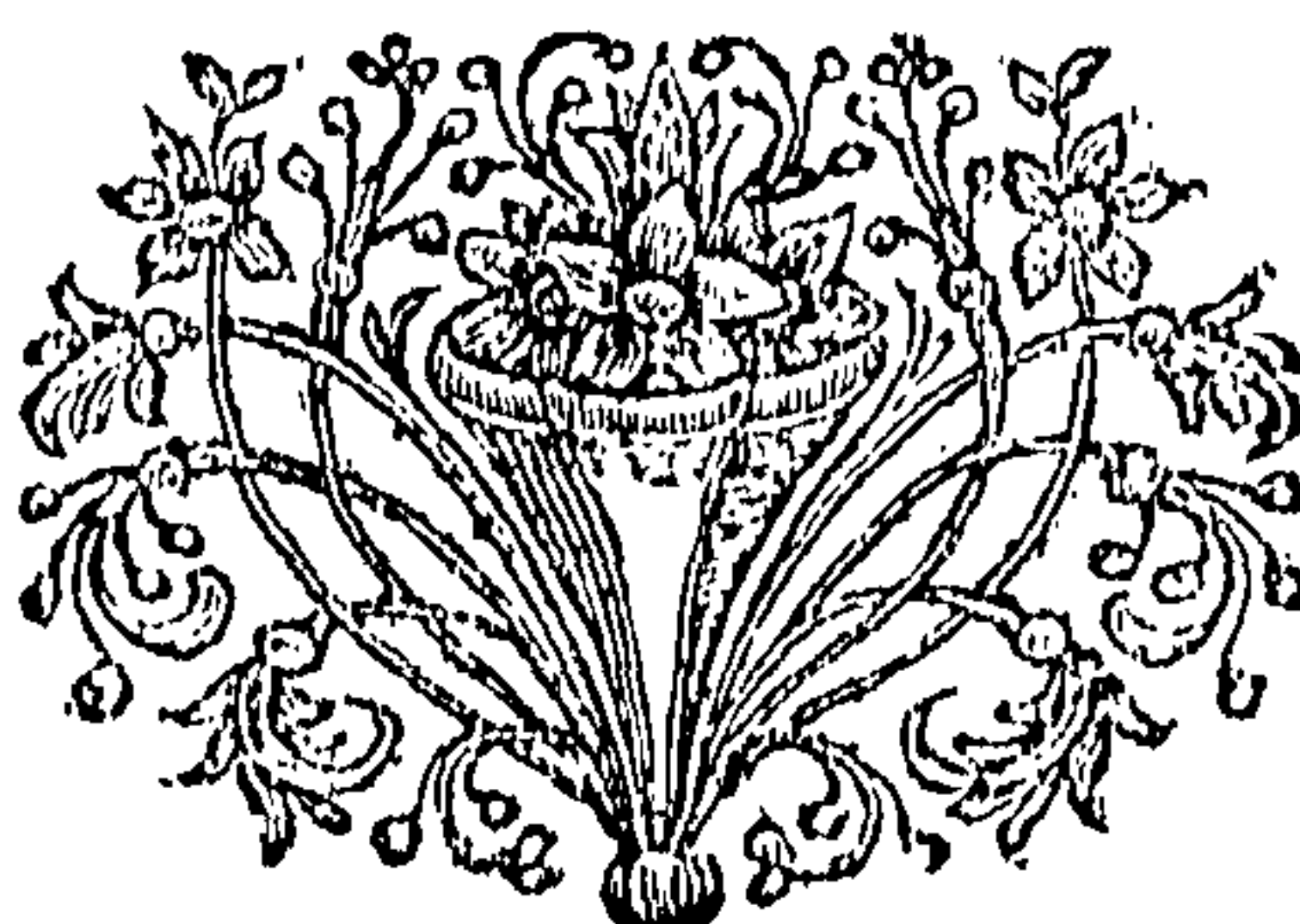
In the mean Time, the Progress which the *Israelites* have hitherto made, the Enemies they have vanquish'd, and the Kingdoms they have seiz'd and divided among themselves, notwithstanding all the Artifices to prevent them, do sufficiently verify that Conclusion, at the End of their Leader's last Exhortation: (b) *Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O People, saved by the Lord, the Shield of thy Help; and who is the Sword of thy Excellency? Thine Enemies shall be found Liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their High Places. The Fountain of Jacob shall be upon a Land of Corn and Wine, and his Heavens shall drop down Dew.*

From Numb.
xviii. to the
End of Deute-
ronomy.

† It is reckon'd good Policy in a *General*, when he has any great Design in Agitation, which cannot so well be executed without passing through a *neutral* Country, not to ask Leave at first, because too much Civility would lay him under the Suspicion of Fear; but first of all to enter the Prince's Country, and then to send and desire Permission for his Troops to march through it. But this was not *Moses's* Practice; he first sent Ambassadors to the King of the *Amorites* with this peaceable Message; "Let me pass through thy Land, we will not turn into the Fields, or into the Vineyards; we will not drink the Waters of the Well; but we will go along by the King's Highway, till we be past the Borders: Thou shalt sell me Meat for Money, that I may eat; and give me Water for Money, that I may drink; only I will pass through on my Feet." Numb. xxi. 22. After so civil a Message as this, if *Sihon* thought not proper to let the Children of *Israel* pass through his Country, he might have contented himself with so doing, because it does not appear, that the *Israelites* ever threaten'd to force their Passage: But when, instead of acting upon the *defensive*, (which was all that in Reason he should have done) he sets himself at the Head of his Forces, and marches out to fight; the War must be deem'd unjust on his Side, and the Fate he met with no more than his Desert. *Calmet's Dictionary*.

(g) Deut. xxxiii. 29, 28.

The End of the Fourth Book.



T H E



T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F T H E
B I B L E.
B O O K V.

*Containing an Account of Things, from the ISRAELITES
Entrance into the Land of CANAAN, to the Building
of SOLOMON'S Temple. In all four hundred and forty
seven Years.*

C H A P. I.

From their Entrance, to the Death of JOSHUA.

The HISTORY.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.

Joshua succeeds
Moses in the
Government of
the Israelites.



PON the Death of *Moses*, *Joshua*, who had a long while been his *prime* Minister, by the Command of God, undertook the Conduct of the Children of *Israel*; and, as it was a very momentous Charge, he was

not a little anxious how he should be enabled to execute it. He saw himself indeed at the Head of *six hundred Thousand* fighting Men; but then the Nations, which he was to subdue, were a warlike and gigantick People, that had already taken the Alarm, and therefore made
From Josh. 1: to the End.

A. M.
2553. &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451. &c.

early Preparations for a Defence ; had fortify'd their Cities, and confederated their Forces against him. And while he was musing on these Things, to give him Encouragement in his Undertaking, † God was pleas'd to assure him, that he would not fail to protect and assist him in it, in the same Manner, as he had done his Predecessor *Moses*, and, provided he took Care to obey his Laws, as *Moses* had done, make the whole Land of *Canaan* a cheap and easy Conquest to him : And

therefore, without perplexing his Mind any farther, he order'd him immediately to set about the Work. From Josh. i. to the End.

* THE City of *Jericho* was just opposite to the Place, where he was to * pass the River *Jordan* ; and, as it was the first that he intended to attack, he thought it adviseable to send two Spies thither, to take a View of the Situation, and Strength, and Avenues of the Place. As soon as the Spies were gone, he bad the Officers go thro' the Camp, and give the People

He sends Spies into the Land of Canaan.

† It is the Opinion of most Interpreters, that, whenever God is said to speak to *Moses*, to *Joshua*, or any other pious Man in the Old Testament, he does not do it by himself, but by an Angel only. This perhaps might be his most common Way of communicating himself ; but there want not several Instances in Scripture, where God himself, or (as others will have it) the eternal *Logos*, converses with his Servants. And this he may do, either by a *mental Locution*, wherein he objects to their Minds the express Idea of what such a Number of Words would convey ; or by a *corporal Locution*, when he assumes an apparent Body, and Speech, in the same Manner that Men speak. But in the Place before us, (whether it were an Angel, or God himself) he seems to have spoken to *Joshua* out of the *Sanctuary*, from whence he had spoken to him, a little before *Moses's* Death, and gave him Encouragement to perform strenuously what he is now putting upon him. *Deut. xxxi. 14, 23.*

* *Jericho* was a City of *Canaan*, which afterwards fell to the Lot of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, about seven Leagues distant from *Jerusalem*, and two from *Jordan*. *Moses* calls it likewise the *City of Palm-Trees*, *Deut. xxxiv. 3.* because there were great Numbers of them in the Plains of *Jericho* ; and not only of Palm-Trees, but, as *Josephus* tells us, (*Antiq. Lib. iv. c. 5.*) Balsam-Trees likewise, which produc'd the precious Liquor in such high Esteem among the Ancients. The Plain of *Jericho* was water'd with a Rivulet, which was formerly salt and bitter, but was afterwards sweeten'd by the Prophet *Elisba*, *2 Kings ii. 21, 22.* whereupon the adjacent Country, which was water'd by it, became not only one of the most agreeable, but most fertile Spots in all that Country. As to the City itself, after it was destroy'd by *Joshua*, it was, in the Days of *Abab*, King of *Israel*, rebuilt by *Hiel* the *Bethelite*, *1 Kings xvi. 34.* and, in the Times of the last Kings of *Judea*, yielded to none, except *Jerusalem*. For it was adorn'd with a royal Palace, wherein *Herod the Great* died ; with an *Hippodromus*, or Place where the *Jewish* Nobility learn'd to ride the Great-Horse, and other Arts of *Chivalry* ; with an *Amphitheatre*, and other magnificent Buildings ; but, during the Siege of *Jerusalem*, the Treachery of its Inhabitants provok'd the *Romans* to destroy it. After the Siege was over, there was another City built, but not upon the same Place, where the two former stood ; for the Ruins of them are seen to this Day. Of what Account and Bigness it was, we have no certain Information ; but some later Travellers inform us, that, at present, it is no more, than a poor, nasty Village of the *Arabs*. *Wells's Geography of the Old and New Testament*, and *Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo.*

* *Jordan* is suppos'd to derive its Name from the *Hebrew* Word *Jor*, which signifies a *Spring*, and *Dan*, which is a small Town, and not far from the Fountain-Head of this River. It is certainly a River of very great Note in Holy Writ, and of it the *Jewish* Historian gives us the following Account : “ The Head of this River has been “ thought to be *Panion* ; but, in Truth, it passes hither under Ground, and the Source of it is *Pbiala*, an hundred “ and twenty Furlongs from *Cæsarea Philippi*, a little on the Right-Hand, and not much out of the Way to *Trachonis*. — From the Cave of *Panion*, it crosses the Bogs and Fens of the Lake *Semechon*, and, after a Course “ of an hundred and twenty Furlongs further, passes under the City of *Julias*, (or *Bethsaida*) and so over the Lake “ *Gennesareth*, or *Tiberias*, and then, running a long Way through a Wilderness or Desert, it empties itself into the “ Lake *Asphaltites*, or the *Dead-Sea*.” Now, since the Cave *Panion* lies at the Foot of Mount *Lebanon*, and the Lake *Asphaltites* reaches to the very Extremity of the South of *Judea*, the River *Jordan* must extend its Course quite from the northern to the southern Boundary of the Holy Land. But the Largeness of this River is far from being equal to its Extent. It may be said indeed to have two Banks, whereof the first and outermost is that, to which the River does, or at least antiently did, overflow at some Seasons of the Year ; but at present (whether the Rapidity of the Current has worn its Channel deeper, or its Waters are directed some other Way) so it is, that it seems to have forgot its antient Greatness : For “ we (says Mr *Maundrell*) could discern no Sign or Probability of such Overflowing, tho’ “ we were there on the 30th of *March*, which is the proper Time for its Inundations. Nay, so far was the River “ from overflowing, that it ran at least two Yards below the Brink of its Channel. After you have descended the “ outermost Bank, continues he, you go about a Furlong upon the level Strand, before you come to the immediate “ Bank of the River, which is so beset with Bushes and Trees, such as *Tamarisks*, *Willows*, *Olanders*, &c. that you “ can see no Water, until you have made your Way through them. In this Cover of the Banks, Lions, and other “ wild Creatures, are said to hide themselves in Summer, but, upon the Inundation of the River, they are forc'd “ to dislodge.” To which the Prophet seems to allude in these Words, *He shall come up like a Lion from the Swelling of Jordan.* *Jer. xlix. 19.* The River, in short, seems much diminish'd from its antient Grandeur ; for it is not above twenty Yards in Breadth, tho' deep and muddy, and a little too rapid to swim over. *Wells and Maundrell, ibid.*

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.

Who, being
kindly enter-
tain'd by Ra-
hab, return to
the Camp in
Safety.

People Notice, that, within three Days, they were to pass the *Jordan*, in order to take Possession of the Promis'd Land, and were therefore † to provide themselves with Victuals for their March. * The Spies, who were sent upon this hazardous Expedition, got safe into the City, and took up their Lodgings in a *Publick-house*, that was kept by a Widow-woman, whose Name was *Rahab*. But they had not been long there, before Intelligence was brought to the King, so that he order'd the Gates to be shut, and Search to be made for the Men: But their *Hofstess*, having had some Notice of it, hid them under some *hempen* Stocks, which lay drying * upon the Roof of her House, and, when the King's Officers came, she told them, " That there had indeed " been two *Strangers* there, who had " made a short Stay at her House, but " that, a little before Sun-Set, they went " away, but might easily be over-taken, " because they had not been long gone:" Whereupon they sent out Messengers after them, as far as the Fords of *Jordan*, but in vain. Having thus eluded the King's Officers, *Rahab* goes up to the Spies, and

tells them, " That she was very confident " their God (who was the only true God, " both in Heaven and Earth) had deli- " ver'd that Country into their Hands; " that the Actions, which he had done " for them, in making all Opposition fall " before them, had struck a *panick* Fear " into all its Inhabitants; and that there- " fore, as she was confident that this " would be the Event, and had, in this " Instance, shewn them uncommon Kind- " nefs, her only Request was, that, when " they came against the City, they would " in Return, spare her's, and her Family's " Lives; for which she desir'd of them " some Assurance." An Offer so generous and so unexpected, join'd with so liberal a Confession, could not but engage the two Spies to a Compliance with what she requested; and therefore they promis'd, and solemnly swore to her, that, whenever they became Masters of the City, not only she, and her Family, but every one else, that was found in her House, should be exempted from the common Ruin.

THE Gates were so closely shut and guarded, that there was no Possibility for making their Escape that Way; but *Rahab's*

From Josh. i.
to the End.

† The *Israelites* usual Food, while they sojourn'd in the Wilderness, was *Manna*; but, as they approach'd the *Promis'd Land*, where they might have Provision in an ordinary Way, that miraculous Bread did perhaps gradually decrease; and, in the Space of a few Days after this, was totally withdrawn. They were now in the Countries of *Sihon* and *Og*, which they had lately conquer'd, and the *Viſuals*, which they were commanded to provide themselves with, were such, as their new Conquest afforded: For being, after three Days (*Josh. iii. 1.*) to remove very early in the Morning, they might not perhaps have had Time to gather a sufficient Quantity of *Manna*, and to bake it, before they were oblig'd to march. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* The *Eastern* Writers tell us, that these *Spies* (whom they make to be *Caleb* and *Phineas*) were valiant and religious Men, and in the Prime of their Youth; that, to pass unobserv'd, they chang'd their Habits, as if they had come from a distant Country, and, if any one ask'd them any Questions, their Reply was to this Effect: " We are " People from the *East*, and our Companions have heard of this powerful People, who were forty Years in the " Wilderness, without either Guide or Provision; and it was reported to us, that they had a God, whom they call'd " the King of Heaven and Earth, and who (as they say) hath given them both your and our Country. Our Princi- " pals have therefore sent us to find out the Truth hereof, and to report it to them. — We have likewise heard " of their Captain, whom they call *Joshua*, the Son of *Nun*, who put the *Amalekites* to flight, who destroy'd *Sihon* " and *Og*, the Kings of *Midian* and *Moab*. Woe therefore be to us, and you, and all that flee to us for Shelter! " They are a People, who pity none, leave none alive, drive all out of their Country, and make Peace with none. " We are all accounted by them Infidels, Profane, Proud, and Rebellious. Whoever of us or you therefore, that in- " tend to take care of themselves, let them take their Families, and be gone, lest they repent of their Stay, when it " is too late." By this Means they impos'd upon the People; and (as *Josephus* informs us) went whither they would, and saw whatever they had a Mind to, without any Stop or Question. They took a View of the Walls, the Gates, the Ramparts, and pass'd the whole Day for Men of Curiosity only, without any Design. So that if any Credit may be given to this Account, it was but just, that they, who thus impos'd upon the *Canaanites*, should, in the same Manner, be impos'd upon by the *Gibeonites*. *Chronicon Samaritanum Arabicè Scriptum*, p. 65. and *Josephus's Antiq.* lib. v. c. 1.

* The Roofs of Houses were then very flat, and, having probably Battlements round them to secure People from falling off, (as the Manner of Building was afterwards among the *Jews*, *Deut. xxii. 8.*) were made use of for Places to walk, or, at any Time, to lay any Kind of Goods upon.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.

Rahab's House being happily situated upon the City-Wall, as soon as it was conveniently dark, she first charg'd them to make to the neighbouring Mountains, where they might keep themselves conceal'd, until the Messengers were return'd, and then let them down by a filken Cord from one of her Windows, which fac'd the Country. But before they parted, they agreed, that this same Cord, hung out at her Window, should be the Token between them; and therefore they desir'd, that whoever she was minded to save, might, when their Army approach'd the City, be kept within Doors. The Spies, having thus luckily escap'd, took *Rahab's* Advice, and conceal'd themselves in the Mountains, until those, who were sent out to pursue them, were return'd to the City, and then they made the best of their Way to the Camp; where they inform'd *Joshua* of their whole Adventure, and, withal, gave him to understand, that the general Consternation, which they found the People in, was to them a sure Omen, that God Almighty intended to crown their Armies with Success.

The Israelites
pass the River
Jordan.

PLEAS'D with this News, *Joshua* gave Orders for the Army to decamp; but before he did that, he reminded the Tribes of *Reuben* and *Gad*, and the Half-Tribe of *Manasseh*, of the Promise they had made *Moses* to assist their Brethren in the Conquest of *Canaan*; † which they readily consented to do, and, not only in that, but in every Thing else, he commanded them to do, promis'd to obey him with the same Chearfulness, that they had done *Moses*: So that forty Thousand of them decamp'd with him, and fell down to the Banks of the *Jordan*.

IT was now in the Time of the Barley-Harvest, (which in these hot Countries falls early in the Spring) when, by reason of hasty Rain, and the melting of the Snow upon Mount *Lebanon*, the River is generally full of Water, and sometimes overflows its Banks: And, as soon as the Army was come within a small Distance of the Place, where it was intended they should cross, *Joshua* sent and communicated to every Tribe, the Order, that was to be observ'd in this solemn March. The Priests, bearing the Ark, were to begin the Procession; each Tribe, in the Order, in which they us'd to march, were to follow. When the Priests were got into the middle of the Channel, there they were to stand still, until the whole Multitude was got safe to the other Shore; and, that this wonderful Passage might be more regarded, they were all enjoin'd to *sanctify themselves*, by washing their Cloaths, avoiding all Impurities, and abstaining from *matrimonial* Intercourse the Night before.

BEFORE they cross'd the River, *Joshua*, by God's Direction, appointed twelve Men, out of every Tribe one, to chuse twelve Stones (according to the Number of their Tribes) in the midst of the Channel, where the Priests, with the Ark, were order'd to stand, and † there to set them up, (that they might be seen from each Side of the River, when the Waters were abated) as a Monument of this great Miracle; and to bring twelve more ashore with them for the like Purpose.

WITH these Orders and Instructions the Army set forward. The Priests, with the Ark, led the *Van*; and as soon as they touch'd the River with their Feet, the

† The two Tribes and an half had the Countries, which had lately been conquer'd, and were now given to them in Possession, to preserve against the Attempts of the Nations, from whom they had taken them; and can hardly be suppos'd to go, one and all, along with their Brethren to the Conquest of their Countries, which lay on the other Side of the River *Jordan*. In the last Muster of the Army, they consisted of above an hundred Thousand able Soldiers; and, we can hardly suppose, that, at this Time, their Number was decreas'd. The forty Thousand, that went over *Jordan*, were but a Part of them, and the rest were left behind to guard their new Conquest against the vanquish'd Nations, that had abundant Reason to become their Enemies. *Saurin*, Vol. III. Dissertation 1.

† It has been a Custom in all Nations to erect Monuments of Stone, in order to preserve the Memory of Covenants, Victories, and other great Transactions; and though there was no Inscription upon these Stones, yet the Number of them, and the Place where they lay (which was not at all stony) was sufficient to signify some memorable Thing, which Posterity would not fail to hand down from one Generation to another. *Patrick's* Commentary, on *Joshua* iv. 7.

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the Stream divided. The Waters above went back, and rose up on Heaps, as far as the City † *Adam*; whilst those, that were below, continuing their Course towards the *Dead-Sea*, open'd a Passage of above 16 or 18 Miles, for the *Israelites* to cross over, and, all the Time, that they were thus crossing, the Priests with the Ark stood in the Middle of the Channel, till every Thing was done, that *Joshua* commanded; and then, upon their coming out of it, the River return'd to its wonted Course.

By this miraculous Passage, *Joshua*, having gain'd the Plains of *Jericho*, encamp'd in a † Place, which was afterwards call'd *Gilgal*; and, while the whole Country lay under a great Terror and Consternation, God commanded † the Rite of *Circumcision*, which for the Space of almost forty Years had been intermitted, to be renew'd, that the People might be qualify'd to partake of the ensuing *Passover*. This was the third Time of their celebrating that *Festival*: The *first* was at their Departure out of *Egypt*; the *second* at their

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† *Adam*, or *Adom*, is a Place situate on the Banks of the River *Jordan*, towards the South of the Sea of *Cinnereth*, or the Sea of *Galilee*. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*.

† *Gilgal*, the Place where the *Israelites* encamp'd for some Time, after their Passage over the River *Jordan*, was so call'd, because here the Rite of *Circumcision*, which had long been disus'd, was renew'd: Whereupon the Lord said unto *Joshua*, *this Day have I rolled away the Reproach of Egypt (i. e. Uncircumcision) from off you*, wherefore the Name of the Place is called *Gilgal* (i. e. rolling) unto this Day. Josh. v. 9. From this Expression the Place receiv'd its Name, and if we look into its Situation, we shall find, that, as the *Israelites* pass'd over *Jordan* right against *Jericho*, Josh. iii. 16. and encamp'd in *Gilgal*, in the East Border of *Jericho*, 'tis plain, that *Gilgal* must be situated between *Jordan* and *Jericho*; and therefore, since *Josephus* tells us, that *Jericho* was sixty Furlongs distant from *Jordan*, and the Camp of *Gilgal* was fifty Furlongs from the same River; it hence follows, that *Gilgal* was ten Furlongs (i. e. about a Mile and a Quarter), from *Jericho* Eastward. But as some learned Men have observ'd, that five of the Furlongs, us'd by *Josephus*, make up an *Italian Mile*, so the Distance between *Gilgal* and *Jericho* will be just two Miles; which exactly agrees with the Testimony of St *Jerom*, who makes it two Miles distant from *Jericho*, and a Place held in great Veneration by the Inhabitants of the Country, in his Days. *Wells's Geography*, Vol. II. c. 4.

† The Command which God gives *Joshua*, concerning the Rite of *Circumcision*, is this ———— *Make thee sharp Knives, and circumcise the Children of Israel, the second Time*, Josh. v. 2. And, after the Rite was perform'd, God said, *This Day have I rolled away the Reproach of Egypt from off you*, ver. 9. Both of which Passages have given no small Trouble to Commentators. The *sharp Knives* are allow'd to be (what our *marginal Notes* call them) *Knives of Flint*, which Stones could not but be plentiful in the Mountains of *Arabia*, and, when made very sharp, were the Knives commonly made use of in the Eastern Countries: But St *Jerom* himself (as great an *Hebraist* as he was) could not find out, what was this *Circumcision*, which was to pass upon the *Israelites* the second Time. Some of the *Jews*, from these Words of *Jeremiah*, *I will punish the Circumcised, that has a Foreskin*, Chap. ix. 25. have undertaken to prove, that it was possible to bring the *Foreskin* again by Art, which the *Israelites* had done, during their Abode in the Wilderness, and for this Reason, were order'd to be circumcised afresh; and those Christians, who have embrac'd this Notion, pretend to support it by the Words of St *Paul*, *If any Man is called, being circumcised, μη επιπροσθεω, let him not get a Foreskin again*, or, as we render it, *let him not become uncircumcised*. But whether the Recovery of a *Prepuce* be a Thing probable or not, 'tis certain, that all the Difficulty of the Words arises from misunderstanding the Idiom of the Original, and may easily be remov'd, if they were translated, or paraphras'd thus,

————— *Let the Ceremony of Circumcision, which has been so long discontinued, be renewed, as it was once heretofore*. While the *Israelites* liv'd in *Egypt*, we do not read of any Neglect of this Rite of *Circumcision* among them; but, while they abode in the Wilderness, there are several Reasons, that might oblige them to omit it, until they arriv'd in the promis'd Land, when they were to renew the Ordinance of the *Passover*, and, previous to that, were all to be circumcis'd; because no uncircumcis'd Person, nor any one who had a Son, or a Man-Servant in his House uncircumcis'd, was capable of being admitted to it, *Exod. xii. 43.* 2d, *The rolling away the Reproach of Egypt*, is suppos'd, by some, to relate to the *Reproaches*, which the *Egyptians* us'd to cast upon the *Israelites*, viz. that the *Egyptians*, seeing the *Israelites* wander so long in the Wilderness, reproach'd and scouted them, as if they were brought to be destroy'd there, and not conducted into the promis'd Land, from which *Reproaches* God now deliver'd them, when, by enjoining *Circumcision*, he gave them Assurance, that they should shortly enjoy the Country, which no uncircumcis'd Person might inherit. Our learned *Spencer* thinks the *Reproach of Egypt* to be the *Slavery*, to which they had long been there subject, but were now fully declar'd a free People, by receiving a Mark of the Seed of *Abraham*, and being made Heirs of the promis'd Land. But the most common Opinion is, that, by the *Reproach of Egypt*, is meant nothing else but *Uncircumcision*, with which the *Israelites* always upbraided other People, and particularly the *Egyptians*, with whom they had liv'd so long, and were best acquainted; and, admitting this to be the true (as it is in the most unconstrained) Sense, this Passage is a plain Proof, that the *Israelites* could not learn the Rite of *Circumcision* from the *Egyptians*, (as some pretend) but that the *Egyptians*, contrary-wise, must have had it from them. *Universal History*, Lib. 1. c. 7. *Spencer de Leg. Heb.* Lib. 1. c. 4. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. III. Lib. 12.

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their Erection of the Tabernacle, at the Foot of Mount *Sinai*; and now, that they were arriv'd in a Country, wherein there was a sufficient Provision of Corn for *unleaven'd Bread*, God insisted upon the Observance of his Ordinances: He was minded indeed, that all Things now should go on in their *regular Way*; and therefore, for the future, he left them to the Provision, which this Land of Plenty afforded them, and ceas'd to supply them any longer with *Manna*.

Take, and sack
Jericho.

GILGAL was much about two Miles from *Jericho*, and therefore *Joshua* might possibly go out alone to *reconnoitre* the City, and to think of the properest Way of besieging it; when, all on a sudden, there † appear'd to him a Person cloath'd in Armour, and standing at some Distance, with a drawn Sword in his Hand. Undaunted at this unusual Sight, *Joshua* advances to him, and, having demanded of what Party he was, the Vision reply'd, that he was for the *Host of Israel*, whose Captain and Guardian he was; and, as *Joshua*, in humble Adoration, was fallen prostrate before him, he order'd him (in the Manner he had done *Moses* at the burning Bush) to loose his Sandals from off his Feet, and then proceeded to instruct him in what Form he would have the Siege carry'd on, that the *Canaanites* might perceive, that it was something more than *the Arm of Flesh*, that fought against them.

THE Form of the Siege was this: —

All the Army was to march round the City, with seven Priests before the Ark, From Josh. i.
to the End. having in their Hands Trumpets made of Rams-Horns, six Days successively. On the *seventh*, after the Army had gone round the City seven Times, upon Signal given, the Priests were to blow a long Blast with their Trumpets, and the People on a sudden set up a loud Shout; at which Instant the Walls of the City should fall so flat to the Ground, that they might directly walk into it without any Let or Obstruction. These Orders were put in Execution; and accordingly on the seventh Day, the Walls fell, and the *Israelites* enter'd. They put every one, Men, Women, and Children, nay the very Beasts, to the Sword, and spar'd no living Creature, but *Rahab* only, and such Relations, as she had taken under the Protection of her Roof, according to the Stipulation, which he had made with her. For *Joshua* had given the two Spies a strict Charge before-hand, that, when the Town was going to be sack'd, they should repair to her House, and convey every Thing safe out, that belong'd to her; which accordingly they did, and then the whole Army fell on, and set Fire to the City, and destroy'd every Thing in it, except the Silver, and Gold, and such Vessels of Brass and Iron, as were to be put into the *Treasury of the House of the Lord*, as they had done once before (a) in a Case of the like Nature: And, that it might never be rebuilt again, *Joshua* † denounc'd a *prophetick Imprecation*

† Who this Person was, that appear'd to *Joshua*, is not so well agreed among Commentators. Some are of Opinion, that it was an Angel, who, because the *Hebrew* calls him *Gebir*, is suppos'd to be *Gabriel*; but there are several Reasons, in this very Account of his Apparition, which denote him to be a divine, and not a created Being. For, in the first Place, besides his assuming the Title of *the Captain of the Host of the Lord*, (an Image under which God himself is frequently represented in Scripture) *Joshua's* calling him *Jehovah*, or the *Lord*, a Name, which neither *Joshua* should have given, nor he accepted of, had he been no more than an Angel; his falling down, and worshipping him, which he durst not have done, (since God alone is to be ador'd) nor would the other have permitted, but rather have reprov'd him, as we find one of them did St *John*, Rev. xxii. 10. are the surest Evidence of the Divinity of his Person. For, when instead of reprov'g him for doing him too much Honour, we find him commanding him to do him more, by requiring him to loose his Shoes from his Feet, insisting upon the highest Acknowledgment of a divine Presence, that was us'd among the *Eastern Nations*, we cannot but think ourselves oblig'd (with a learned *Rabbin*) freely to confess, that this Angel, who suffer'd himself to be worshipp'd, and by whose Presence the Place where he appear'd was sanctified, so that *Joshua* was commanded to put off his Shoes, no doubt was the very same, whom all the Angels of Heaven do worship. *Job. à Coch.* upon the *Gemara* of the *Sanhedrin*, Vol. III. Dissertation II.

(a) Numb. xxxi. 22, 23.

† The Words of *Joshua's* Execration are these: — Cursed be the Man before the Lord, that raiseth up, and buildeth this City *Jericho*: he shall lay the Foundation thereof in his First-born, and in his youngest Son shall be set up the Gates of it,

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Imprecation on the Man, (*viz.* that it should occasion the utter Ruin of his Family) that should attempt it.

The Death of
Achan for pur-
loining Part of
the Booty.

† *AI* was a little City, about twelve Miles distant from *Jericho*; and, as *Joshua* knew, that it was neither populous, nor well-defended, he detach'd a small Body, of three Thousand Men only, to go, and attack it. But, contrary to their Expectation, the Inhabitants of the Place fall'd out upon them, and, having slain some few, put the rest to flight, and pursu'd them as far as their own Camp. This Defeat (how small soever) struck such a Damp upon the People's Courage, that * *Joshua* was forc'd to have Recourse to God, who immediately answer'd him (by *Urim*, as is suppos'd) that his Commands had been *sacrilegiously* infring'd, and

therefore order'd him to have the Offender punish'd with Death, and directed him to a Method, how to discover who he was.

From Josh. i.
to the End.

BEFORE the Taking of *Jericho*, (*b*) *Joshua* had caution'd the People not to spare any Thing that was in it, but to burn, and destroy all that came in their Way, except Silver, and Gold, and Brass, and Iron, which were to be consecrated to the Lord: But, notwithstanding his strict Charge against reserving any Thing, that was either *devoted* to this general Destruction, or *consecrated* to the Lord; a Man of the Tribe of *Judah*, whose Name was *Achan*, took some of the rich Plunder, and conceal'd it in his Tent. To find out the Person therefore, *Joshua*, early next Morning, call'd all the Tribes together before

it, Josh. vi. 26. " This Anathema (says *Maimonides*) was pronounc'd, that the Miracle of the Subversion of *Jericho* " might be kept in perpetual Memory; for whosoever saw the Walls sunk deep into the Earth (*as he understands it*) " would clearly discern, that this was not the Form of a Building destroy'd by Men, but *miraculously* thrown down by " God." *Hiel* however, in the Reign of *Abab*, either not remembering, or not believing this Denunciation, was so taken with the Beauty of its Situation, that he rebuilt *Jericho*, and (as the sacred History informs us) laid the Foundation thereof in *Abiram*, his First-born, and set up the Gates thereof in his youngest Son *Segub*, according to the Word of the Lord, which he spake by *Joshua*, the Son of *Nun*, 1 Kings xvi. 34. However, after that *Hiel* had ventur'd to rebuild it, no Scruple was made of inhabiting it; for it afterwards became famous upon many Accounts. Here the Prophet sweeten'd the Waters of the Spring that supply'd it, and the neighbouring Countries: Here *Herod* built a sumptuous Palace: It was the Dwelling-Place of *Zaccheus*; and was honour'd with the Presence of *Christ*, who vouchsaf'd likewise to work some Miracles here. Universal History, Lib. i. c. 7.

† We have this Place mention'd in the History of *Abraham*, who, both before and after his going into *Egypt*, pitch'd his Tent between *Bethel* and *AI*, or *Hai*, as it was then call'd; and, from both *Gen.* xii. 8. and *Josh.* vii. 2. it appears, that this City lay to the East of *Bethel*, about three Leagues from *Jericho*, and one from *Bethel*, as *Mosias* informs us; and the Reason why *Joshua* sent so small a Detachment against it was, because the Place in itself was neither strong nor large. For, when it was taken, the Number of the Slain, both in it, and *Bethel*, which (as some think) was confederate with it, were but twelve Thousand, both of Men and Women, Josh. viii. 25. The Providence of God however was very visible in sending so small a Party against *AI*: For, if the Flight of three Thousand Men put the *Israelites* into such a Consternation, as we read *Josh.* vii. 5, 6. what a Condition would they have been in, if all the People had been discomfited, as doubtless it would have happen'd, while the Guilt of *Achan's* Sacrilege remain'd unpunish'd? *Wells's Geography*, Vol. II. c. 4.

* The Spirits of the Army (as *Josephus* tells us) were so sunk upon this Disorder, and cast down into such a Desperation of better Things to come, that, after they had spent the whole Day in Fasting, Weeping, and Mourning, *Joshua* address'd himself, with a more than ordinary Importunity, to Almighty God, in Words to this Effect: " It is not any Temerity, O Lord, or Ambition of our own, that has brought us hither to make War upon this " People, but a pure Deference and Respect to the Persuasion of thy Servant *Moses*, that has incited us to this " Undertaking; and not without a Warrant of many Signs and Miracles, to convince us, that he had Reason and " Authority on his Side, when he told us, that thou thyself hadst promis'd us the Possession of this Country, and " to give us Victory over all our Enemies. But what a Change is here, all on a sudden, in the Disappointment of " our Hopes, and in the Loss of our Friends! As if either *Moses's* Prediction had not been of divine Inspiration, " or, otherwise thy Promises and Purposes variable. If this be the Beginning of a War, we cannot but dread the " further Progress of it, for fear that this Miscarriage, upon the first Experiment, should prove only the Earnest " of greater Evils to come. But, Lord, thou alone, that art able to give us Relief, help us, and save us. Vouchsafe " unto us Comfort, and Victory; and be graciously pleas'd to preserve us from the Snare of despairing for the future. " *Jewish Antiquities*, Lib. 5. c. 1.

(*b*) Josh. vi. 18, 19.

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before the Tabernacle, where, † by casting the Lot, first upon the Tribes, and so proceeding from Tribe to Family, from Family to Household, and from Household to particular Persons, the *Criminal* was, at last, found to be *Achan*; who, upon *Joshua's* Admonition, confess'd the Fact, viz. that he had secreted * a royal Robe, two hundred Shekels of Silver, and a large Wedge of Gold; and when, upon Search, the Things were produc'd in the Presence of all the People, they took him, and all his Family, his Cattle, his Tent, and all his Moveables, and carrying them to a neighbouring Valley, (which, from that Time, † in Allusion to this Man's Name,

was call'd the Valley of *Achar*) || there they ston'd him, and those belonging to his Family, as Accomplices in his Crimes. Whatever Goods or Utensils he had, these they consum'd with Fire, and so rais'd a great Heap of Stones over all, that thereby they might perpetuate the Memory of the Crime, and deter others from the like Provocation.

AFTER this Execution of the divine Justice, God order'd *Joshua* to attempt the Conquest of *Ai* once more, and promis'd him Success; which might best be obtain'd, as he told him, by laying an *Ambuscade* somewhere behind the City, towards *Bethel*. † Thirty Thousand Men were

From Josh. i.
to the End.

The Taking
and Sacking of
Ai.

† Some *Jewish* Doctors are of Opinion, that, in the Discovery of the guilty Person, there was no Use made of Lots at all, but that all *Israel*, being order'd to pass by the High-Priest, who, on this Occasion, had his *Pectoral* on, in which were the twelve Stones with the Names of the twelve Tribes engraven on them, when the Tribe, to which the guilty Person belong'd, was call'd, the Stone, in which was the Name of that Tribe, chang'd Colour, and turn'd black; and so it did, when the Family, the Household, and the Person was call'd: But this is a mere Fiction. There is much more Probability in the Opinion of those, who suppose, that, at first, twelve *Lots*, or *Tickets* were put into one *Urn*, on each of which was written the Name of one of these twelve Tribes: That when one of the twelve Tribes were found guilty, then were there as many Lots put in, as there were Families in that Tribe; after that, as many as there were Householders in that Family; and, at last, as many, as there were Heads in that Household, until the *Criminal* was detected. But others will have it, that this was done by the High-Priest alone, who, by a divine Inspiration, at that Time, was enabled, without any more to do, to declare who the culpable Person was. *Saurin's* Dissertations, Vol. III. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries, on *Josh. vii.*

* In the Original, this Robe is call'd a *Garment of Shinar*, i. e. of *Babylon*; and the general Opinion is, that the Richness and Excellency of it consisted not so much in the *Stuff*, whereof it was made, as in the Colour whereof it was dy'd, which most suppose to have been *Scarlet*, a Colour in high Esteem among the Ancients, and for which the *Babylonians* were justly famous. *Bochart* however maintains, that the Colour of this Robe was *various*, and not all of one Sort; that the scarlet Colour the *Babylonians* first receiv'd from *Tyre*, but the *Party-colour*, whether so woven, or wrought with the Needle, was of their own Invention, for which he produces many Passages out of *Heathen* Authors. Such as,

Non ego prætulerim Babylonica picta superbè

Texta, Semiramidæ quæ variantur Acu.

MART. Ep. Lib. 8.

Hæc mihi Memphis Tellus dat Munera, victa est

Pectine Niliaco jam Babylonis Acus.

Ibid. Lib. 14.

with many more Citations out of several other Writers. However this be, 'tis certain, that the Robe could not fail of being a very rich and splendid one, and therefore captivated either *Achan's* Pride, or rather Covetousness; since his Purpose seems to have been, not so much to wear it himself, as to sell it for a large Price. *Bochart's* Phaleg, Lib. 1. c. 9. *Saurin*, Lib. 3. Dissertation 3.

† 'Tho' his Name was primarily *Achan*, yet, ever after his Execution, he was call'd *Achar*, (so the *Syriack* Version, *Josephus*, *Athanasius*, *Basil*, and others, mention'd by *Bochart*, name him) which signifies the *Troubler* of *Israel*. *Patrick's* Commentary, on *Josh. viii.*

|| Since the Law against Sacrilege condemns Transgressors to the Flames, and God commanded the Person here guilty to be burnt accordingly, *Josh. vii. 18.* the *Jews* affirm, that *Achan* was actually burnt; and, whereas it is said in the Text, that *he was stoned*, they think that this was done, not *judicially*, but *accidentally* by the People, who were so highly provok'd, that they could not forbear casting Stones at him, as he was was led to Execution. Vid. *Munf.* in *Josh. vii.*

† Some are of Opinion, that this Detachment of thirty Thousand made up the whole Force, that was employ'd in this Expedition against *Ai*; and that, out of these, five Thousand were sent to lie in Ambush, that, at a convenient Time, they might set fire to the City: But this is so directly contrary to God's Command of *Joshua's* taking all the People of War with him, which accordingly, in chap. viii. 3, 11. we are told he did, that there is no Foundation for it. And therefore it is reasonable to suppose, that the whole Body, design'd for the Ambuscade, consisted of thirty Thousand Men, and that the five Thousand, mention'd in the 12th Verse, was a small Party, detach'd from these, in order to creep closer to the City, while the five and twenty Thousand kept themselves absconded behind the Mountains, until a proper Signal was given, both from the City, when this small Party had taken it, and from the grand Army, when they had repuls'd the Enemy, that then they might come out from their Ambush, and intercept them, as they were making their Flight. *Patrick's* Commentary, on *Josh. viii.*

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were therefore drawn out, and sent away by Night upon this Expedition, with Instructions to enter the City, as soon as the *Signal* (which was to be a Spear, with a Banner upon it) was given them: And early next Morning, he himself march'd, with the Remainder of his Forces, against the City. As soon as the King of *Ai* perceiv'd him, he sall'y'd hastily out of the Town, with all his Troops, and all his People, and fell upon the *Israelites*, who, at the first Onset, fled, as if they had been under some great Terror. But this was only a *Feint*, to draw the Enemy into the Plain; and therefore as soon as *Joshua* saw, that, by this Stratagem, the City was pretty well empty'd, he gave the Signal to the Ambuscade, which, finding it now defenceless, immediately enter'd, and set it on Fire.

By the Ascent of the Smoak, *Joshua* discern'd that his Men had got Possession of the Town, and therefore facing about, he began to charge the Enemy very briskly: who, little expecting that the *Israelites* would rally, began now to think of retreating to the City; but, when they saw it all in Flames, and the Party, which had set it on Fire, issuing out, and just going to fall upon their Rear, they were so dismay'd and dispirited, that they had Power neither to fight nor fly: So that all the Army was cut to Pieces; the City was burnt, and made an Heap of Rubbish; every Soul in it, Man, Woman, and Child, were put to the Sword; and the King, who was taken

Prisoner, was order'd to be hang'd upon a Gibbet till Sun-set, when he was taken down, thrown in at a Gate of the City, and a great Heap of Stones rais'd over him.

AFTER this Action was over, the Cattle, and all the Spoil of the City, was, by God's Appointment, given to the Soldiers; and, as *Joshua* was now not far distant from the Mountains of *Gerizim* and *Ebal*, this reminded him of the Command, which (c) *Moses* had given, about reading the Law, with the Blessings and Curses thereunto annex'd, from those two Mountains; which he not only order'd to be done, but had an Altar likewise erected, whereon not only Sacrifices were offer'd, to give God the Glory of all his Victories; but † an *Abridgment* of the Law, or some remarkable Part of it was likewise engraven, at the same Time that the *whole* of it was read in a large Assembly of all the Tribes.

JOSHUA's Success against the two Towns of *Jericho*, and *Ai*, and the terrible Slaughter, he had made among their Inhabitants, had * so alarm'd the Kings on that Side the *Jordan*, that they confederated together, and enter'd into League for their mutual Defence: But the *Gibeonites*, foreseeing the Destruction that was hastening upon them, endeavour'd by a Stratagem to gain a Peace with the *Israelites*, which they effected in this Manner. — They chose a certain Number of artful Men, who † were instructed to feign themselves *Ambassadors* come from a far

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The League craftily acquir'd by the Gibeonites.

(c) Deut. xi. 29. and xxvii. 1,—13.

† It is a Question (as we said before, page 489 in the Notes) among the Learned, what it was, that was written upon these Stones? But besides other Conjectures already enumerated, some think it not unlikely, to have been a Copy of the Covenant, by which the Children of *Israel* acknowledg'd, that they held the Land of *Canaan* of God, upon Condition, that they observ'd his Laws, to which they and their Posterity had oblig'd themselves; for this was the third Time, that the Covenant between God and his People was renew'd, and therefore the Contents of that Covenant might be very proper, at this Time, to be thus monumentally recorded. *Patrick* on Deut. xxvii. 3. and Josh. viii. 32.

* The *Torah*, in the *Talmud*, tell us likewise, that a farther Cause of the *Gibeonites* Fear, was, the Inscription, which they had met with upon Mount *Ebal*, where, among other Parts of the Law, which *Joshua* (as they pretend) wrote upon Stones, they found the Orders, which both he and *Moses* had receiv'd from God, utterly to extirpate all the Inhabitants of the Land of *Canaan*. *Saurin*, Lib. iii. Dissertation 4.

† It is a Question among the *Casuits*, whether the *Gibeonites* could, with a good Conscience, pretend that they were Foreigners, and tell a Lye to save their Lives? And to this *Puffendorf* (*Droit de la Nature*, Lib. iv. c. 2.) thus replies. *The Artifice of the Gibeonites*, says he, *had nothing blameable in it, nor does it properly deserve the Name of a Lye: For what Crime is there in any one's making Use of an innocent Fiction, in order to elude the Fury of an Enemy, that would destroy all before them? Nor did the Israelites indeed properly receive any Damage from this Imposture: For what does any one lose, in not shedding the Blood of another, when he has it in his Power to take from him all his Substance, after*

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far distant Country, in order to obtain a League with the People of *Israel*: And, to gain Credit to this their Pretence, they dress'd themselves in old Clothes, had old clouted Shoes on their Feet, carry'd dry musty Bread in their Bags, and the Bottles, wherein they kept their Wine, were † all sadly tarnish'd and torn. In this Plight they came to the Camp at *Gilgal*, and, being introduc'd to *Joshua*, they told him, "That the Fame of many Miracles, which God had wrought for them in the Land of *Egypt*, and the wonderful Successes, wherewith he had bless'd their Arms against every *Power*, that had oppos'd them in their coming to that Place, had reach'd even their remote and distant Country; for which Reason their *States* and Rulers had sent them a long Way, that, by all Means imaginable, they might obtain a Peace with a People so renown'd all the World over, and so favour'd and honour'd by God:" And then shewing their Cloaths, Shoes, and other Tokens of the long Journey they had taken, they solemnly assur'd them, that all these Things were quite new, when at first they set out from home, and thence left them to judge how distant and remote their Country was.

THIS plausible Story, confirm'd as they thought by so many Evidences, gain'd Credit with the *Israelites*, so that they enter'd

into amicable Alliance with them; and the other took Care to have the Treaty immediately ratify'd, both by *Joshua*, and all the Princes of the Congregation. In three Days Time the Imposture was discover'd; and they, who pretended to come from a distant Country, were found to be near Neighbours, and some of those very People, whom *Joshua* was commission'd to destroy: So that when the Thing came to be rumour'd about, the People began to murmur against their Princes for their Indiscretion, and were for having the League cancell'd; but, as it was confirm'd by a solemn Oath, this they could not do, without incurring the divine Displeasure. And therefore, tho' they might not take away their Lives, they might nevertheless hold them in a State of Servitude, and, as long as they liv'd, make them useful Drudges, Hewers of Wood, and Drawers of Water, and the like, which would both punish them much, and prove full as beneficial to the Commonwealth; and with this Apology the People were appeas'd. *Joshua* however sent for some of the Chief of the *Gibeonites*, and having expostulated the Cheat with them, (which they excus'd upon the Score of saving their own Lives) he told them what the Determination of the Princes was, *viz.* that they should remain in a State of perpetual Bondage; which they receiv'd without any Manner of Murmuring, and humbly

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having so weaken'd and disarm'd him, that he is no more able to rebel against him? But the Opinion of this great Man seems to be a little erroneous in this Case. Had the *Israelites* indeed been a Pack of common Murtherers, who, without any Commission from Heaven, were carrying Blood and Desolation into Countries, where they had no Right; or had the *Gibeonites* been ignorant, that a miraculous Providence conducted these Conquerors; the Fraud, which they here put upon them, might then be deem'd innocent: For there is no Law, that obliges us, under the Pretence of Sincerity, to submit to such Incendiaries, and merciless Usurpers, as are for setting fire to our Cities, and putting us and our Families to the Edge of the Sword. But the Case of the *Gibeonites* was particular; and if, in other Things, they went contrary to Truth, in this they certainly adher'd to it, when they told *Joshua*, *We are come, because of the Name of the Lord thy God, for we have heard of the Fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two Kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, &c.* Josh. ix. 9, 10. The Idea, which they had conceiv'd of the God of *Israel*, should have put them upon some other Expedient, than that of Lying and Deceit. They should have inquir'd (as far as the obscure Dispensation they were under would have permitted them) into the Cause of God's Severity against them. They should have acknowledg'd, that it was their grievous Sins, which drew down this heavy Judgment upon their Nation; and, after they had repented thereof in Sackcloth and Ashes, they should have committed the rest to Providence, never doubting, but that he, who had chang'd the very Course of Nature to punish the Guilty, would always find out some Means or other, to save the Penitent: But this they did not do, and therefore they were culpable. *Saurin*, Vol. III. Dissertation 4.

† These Bottles were not of Glass, or Clay, as those in Use among us, but were made of Leather, in which they formerly (and even now in some Countries) kept their Wine.

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*The Conquest of
the Confederate
Kings in the
South, and
Sun and Moon's
standing still.*

humbly acquiesc'd in whatever was thought proper to be impos'd upon them.

THE confederate Princes, hearing of this separate Treaty, which the *Gibeonites* had made with *Israel*, were resolv'd to be reveng'd of them for their Desertion of the common Cause; and accordingly joining all their Forces together, they came and invested their Town. The *Gibeonites*, in this Distress, not daring to trust to their own Strength, sent an Express to *Joshua* for speedy Help; who set out with all Expedition, and, by quick Marches, and the Favour of the Night, came upon the Enemy sooner than they expected, and, early next Morning, fell upon them, and routed them. In this Expedition God had all along encourag'd *Joshua*, and promis'd him Success; and therefore, as the confederate Forces were endeavouring to escape, and save themselves by Flight, he pour'd such a Storm of Hail upon them, as destroy'd more, than what perish'd by the Sword.

JOSHUA, on the other Hand, was very desirous to make the most of this happy Opportunity; and therefore, in full Chase of Victory, he address'd himself to God, that the Sun and Moon might stand still, and so prolong the Day, until he had compleated his Victory which God was pleas'd to grant: So that this was the most memorable Day, that ever happen'd, wherein the *Almighty listen'd to the Voice of a Man*, to change the Course of Na-

ture, and stop the Motion of those rolling Orbs. From Josh. i. to the End.

THE confederate Kings, being thus put to Flight, and either frighten'd at the Storm of Hail, or at the close Pursuit of the Enemy, made to a Cave near † *Makkedah*, and there ran in to hide themselves: But *Joshua*, having Intelligence of it, commanded the Cave to be block'd up, and a Guard to be set over it, and so continu'd his Pursuit, that he might cut off as many, as he possibly could, before they reach'd to their fortify'd Towns. In his Return, he order'd the Cave to be open'd, and the Kings to be brought forth; and, when Execution was done upon them, he caus'd their Bodies to be hang'd upon several Trees, until the Evening; when they were taken down, and cast into the Cave, where they thought to have hid themselves, so that the Place of their intended *Sanctuary* became their *Sepulchre*. After this signal Victory, *Joshua* took all the southern Parts of *Canaan*, which afterwards belong'd to the Tribes of *Judah*, *Simeon*, *Benjamin*, *Dan*, and *Ephraim*; and, having thus ended his second Campaign, he return'd, with his Army, to the Camp at *Gilgal*.

HERE he continu'd for some Time without entering upon any fresh Action, until several Princes of the North of *Canaan*, under *Jabin* King of *Hazor*, confederated together, and rais'd a vast Number of Forces, which encamp'd not far from † the Waters of *Merom*; and * what made the

*The Conquest of
the Confederate
Kings in the
North.*

† It was a City in the Tribe of *Judah*, about eight Miles distant from *Eleutheropolis*, which Place, tho' it is nowhere mention'd in the Scripture-History, because it was built after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, is, nevertheless, frequently taken notice of by *Eusebius*, and *Jerom*, as a *Point*, from whence they measure the Distances of other Places. Its Name imports a *free City*, and was itself situate in the Tribe of *Judah*. *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. II. c. 4.

† These Waters are generally suppos'd, by learned Men, to be the Lake *Semechon*, which lies between the Head of the River *Jordan*, and the Lake of *Gennesareth*; since it is agreed on all Hands, that the City *Hazor*, where *Jabin* reign'd, was situate upon this Lake. But others think, that the Waters of *Merom*, or *Merome*, were somewhere about the Brook *Kishon*; since there is a Place of that Name mention'd in the Account of the Battle against *Sisera*, *Judg. v. 21*. And it is more rational to think, that the confederate Kings advanc'd as far as the Brook *Kishon*, and to a *Pass*, which led into their Country, to hinder *Joshua* from penetrating it, or even to attack him in the Country, where he himself lay encamp'd, than to imagine that they waited for him, in the Midst of their own Country, leaving all *Gallies* at his Mercy, and the whole Tract, from the Brook *Kishon*, to the Lake *Semechon*. *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. III. c. 5. *Reland's Palest. Lib. 1. c. 40.* and *Calmet on Josh. xl. 5.*

* Their whole Army, according to *Josephus*, was computed to amount to three hundred Thousand Foot, ten Thousand Horse, and two Thousand Chariots; and, to oppose against these the *Israelites* had no Horse in their Armies, because God had interdicted them, (*Deut. xvii. 16.*) lest a Traffick into *Egypt* for that Sort of Cattle should be a Snare to

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the Army more formidable, was the great Number of Horses, and * arm'd Chariots they had, whereas the *Israelites* were all on Foot. This however did not in the least discourage *Joshua*, who, in Pursuance of the Instructions which God had given him, immediately took the Field, march'd directly towards the Enemy, fell suddenly upon them, and put all (except those, * that made their Escape into other Countries) to the Sword; ham-strung their Horses, and burnt their Chariots with Fire. *Jabin* had been the Head of the Confederacy against him, and therefore he kill'd

him, and caus'd his City to be burnt to the Ground; but the other Cities, whose Inhabitants were slain in Battle, he left standing, and gave the Plunder of them to the Soldiers.

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to the End.

Thus *Joshua* subdu'd all the Land of *Canaan* † by Degrees: He put its Inhabitants, its Kings, (who were one and thirty in Number) and all the *Giants*, that dwelt therein, except some few that still remain'd among the *Philistines*, to the Sword; and having now extended his Conquest, as far as it was convenient at that Time, he began to think of dividing the Country, among

The Division
of the Land of
Canaan among
the Tribes.

to entangle them in Idolatry; or lest, having a Quantity thereof, they should put their Confidence rather in them, than in the divine Assistance; for which Reason the Prophet denounces a *Woe upon them, that go down into Egypt for Help, and stay on Horses, and trust in Chariots, because they are many, and in Horsemen, because they are strong, but they look not to the Holy One of Israel, neither seek they the Lord*, Isa. xxxi. 1.

* The Chariots, which the ancient Historians usually call *Currus Falciferi*, *Covini Falciferi*, *Quadrigæ Falcata*, ἀρμαλα δρεπανοφόρα, &c. are describ'd after the following Manner: "The Beam, to which the Horses were fasten'd, was arm'd with Spikes with Iron-points, which projected forward: The Yokes of the Horses had two cutting Falchions of three Cubits length: The Axle-Trees had fixed to them two Iron-Spits, with Scythes at their Extremities; the Spokes of the Wheels were arm'd with *Javelins*, and the very *Fellowes* with Scythes, which tore every Thing they met with to pieces. The Axle-Tree was longer, and the Wheels stronger than usual, that they might be the better able to bear a Shock, and the Chariot less liable to be overturn'd." The *Charioteer*, who was cover'd all over with Armour, sat in a Kind of Tower, made of very solid Wood, about Breast high, and sometimes Men well arm'd were put into the Chariot, and fought from thence with Darts and Arrows. So that a dreadful Slaughter these Machines must at first have made, when they met with the Enemies Troops; but, in Time, when Men came to find out the Way of declining them, they did not do so much Execution, and were consequently disus'd. Vid. *Diodorus Siculus*, Lib. 17. *Quint. Curtius*, Lib. 4. *Xenophon Cyropæd.* Lib. 6. *Lucretius*, De Rer. Nat. Lib. 6.

* Some *Jewish* Authors will needs have it, that, when *Joshua* went into the Land of *Canaan*, he propos'd three Things to the Inhabitants thereof, either that they should leave the Country, or come and make their Submission, or take up Arms and fight him. But this is said, in some Measure to excuse the *Jewish* General, and to mollify the Rigour of his Proceedings. His express Command from God was, to extirpate the seven Nations, without making any Treaty, or giving Quarter: And, tho' the *Gibeonites* by Guile had obtain'd a Kind of League with him, yet the Conditions, which he thereupon impos'd, were so very hard, that they could not but deter others from making the like Attempt. It is not therefore to be wonder'd, that the *Canaanites*, who saw themselves drove to the Necessity either of Death or Slavery, (after they had try'd the Fate of their Arms so often to no Purpose) should endeavour to make their Escape from a People every where victorious, and who were enjoin'd to be cruel and remorseless by their very God, who had given them this Success. Nor can we suppose, but that God, who was minded to make Room for his own People, did (according to his Promise, *Exod. xxiii. 27.*) inject upon this Occasion a Terror extraordinary into the Natives of the Country, and make them desire to be gone: And when they were desirous to be gone, they had the *Ports*, lying upon the *Mediterranean Sea*, very commodious for their Purpose. For, whether the Towns of *Tyre* and *Sidon* were at this Time built or no, 'tis certain, that the Places, where these Towns stood, could not but be proper Harbours for Shipping; and, as the *Phœnicians* were still Masters of the Sea-Coasts, by their Assistance the *Canaanites* might make their Escape into what Parts they pleas'd. The *Phœnicians*, much about this Time, did certainly send out a vast many Colonies; but, as it cannot be suppos'd, that so small a Country should produce such Swarms, the greatest Part of them are presum'd to be the *Refugees* of *Canaan*, who made their Escape by Shipping to all the Coasts, which lay round the *Mediterranean* and *Ægean Seas*, and even to other Parts of *Europe*, *Asia*, and *Africa*, as the learned *Bachart* has given us a large Account in his *Canaan*, from page 345, to page 699. *Calmet's Dissertation sur le Pays, où se sauverent les Cananéens chassés par Josué.*

† These great Atchievements may be allow'd to have taken up some Years. The History indeed informs us, that *Joshua* made War a long Time with all these Kings, Josh. xi. 18. And, from the Words of *Caleb*, wherein he gives *Joshua* an Account of his Age, and that it was five and forty Years, since he was sent a Spy to *Kadesh-barnea*, there cannot be well less, than between six and seven Years, spent in this War; and why the War was so long continu'd, God himself assigns this Reason: ————— I will not drive them out from before thee in one Year, lest the Land become desolate, and the Beasts of the Field multiply against thee: By little and little will I drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the Land, *Exod. xxiii. 29, 30.*



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among the Tribes, that were yet unprovided for, and of dismissing the two Tribes and an half, who had accompany'd him in the Wars, but had their Habitations already settled by *Moses*, on the *East* Side of the River *Jordan*. To this Purpose he appointed *Commissioners*, who should take an exact Survey of the Country, and bring in a full Report without Delay; which when they had done, † the Country was divided into equal Portions, for which each Tribe (according (d) to God's Directions) cast Lots: But, because some Tribes were larger, and some Territories richer, than others, *Joshua* and *Eleazar*, together with the Princes of the People, took care to adjust the Proportion of Land to the Largeness of the Tribe, and in subdividing that, to consider the Number of each Family, and Household; pursuing exactly the Orders, which God gave to his Servant *Moses*: (e) *Unto these the Land shall be divided for an Inheritance, according to the Number of Names. To many thou shalt give the more Inheritance; and to few thou shalt give the less Inheritance.——Notwithstanding the Land shall be divided by Lot;——according to Lot shall the Possession thereof be divided among many, and few.*

The Dismission
of the Reubenites, &c. and
a Misunder-
standing recti-
fied.

HAVING thus divided the Country on the West Side of the *Jordan*, *Joshua* had a little Place given him for his own Habita-

tion not far from *Shiloh*, where, after the Wars, the Tabernacle was set up, that he might have an Opportunity of consulting God upon any Occasion; and, after all Things were in this Manner regulated, he call'd together the *Reubenites*, *Gadites*, and the Half Tribe of *Manasseh*, who had serv'd for almost seven Years, as *Auxiliaries* in the Wars of *Canaan*, and gave them an honourable Dismission. “ He “ acknowledg'd, that they had duly executed the Condition, which they promis'd to *Moses*, in accompanying their Brethren, and helping them to subdue their Enemies, and commended their Courage and Fidelity for so doing. He exhorted them, now that they were going to separate from the Tabernacle, never to neglect the Service of God, but to bear always in Mind those venerable Laws, which he had given them by his great Legislator. He advis'd them to distribute a Share of the rich Booty, they had taken from the *Canaanites*, among their Brethren on the other Side of *Jordan*; because, tho' they had not partaken of the Peril of the late War, they had nevertheless done them great Service, in protecting their Families from the Insults of their Enemies on every Side:” And * with these Acknowledgments, and Exhortations, together with

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† Those, who are minded to know what particular Towns and Territories fell to each Tribe, had best consult what *Josephus*, in his *Jewish Antiquities*; *Jerom*, de Locis Hebraicis; *Roland*, de Urbibus & Vicis Palestinae; *Masius*, in *Joshua*; *Fuller*, in his *Pisgab-Sight*; *Raleigh*, in his *History*, Part I. Lib. 2. *Wells*, in his *Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. II. *Patrick*, *Pool*, *Le Clerc*, and several others, in their Commentaries, have said upon this Subject. We shall make this one Remark, which *Masius*, in his rich Commentary upon *Joshua*, furnishes us with, viz. that as *Jacob* and *Moses*, at the Approach of their Deaths, foretold the very Soil and Situation of every particular Country, that should fall to each Tribe; so, upon this Division by Lots, it accordingly came to pass. To the Tribe of *Judah*, there fell a Country, abounding with *Vines*, and Pasture-Grounds, Gen. xlix. 11. To that of *Assur*, one plenteous in *Oil*, *Iron*, and *Brass*, Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25. To that of *Naphthali*, one extending from the *West* to the *South* of *Judea*, Ibid. xxxiii. 23. To that of *Benjamin*, one, in which the Temple was afterwards built, Ibid. xxxiii. 12. To those of *Zebulun* and *Issachar*, such as had Plenty of *Sea-Ports*, Gen. xlix. 13. To those of *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, such as were renown'd for their precious Fruits, Deut. xxxiii. 14. And to those of *Simeon* and *Levi*, no particular Countries at all; for as much as the former had a Portion with *Judah*, and the other was interspers'd among the several Tribes. Since therefore (as our Commentator reasons) each particular Lot answer'd so exactly to each Prediction, it must needs be the Height of Insolence or Stupidity, not to acknowledge the divine Inspiration in these Predictions, and the divine Direction in these Lots.

(d) Josh. xiv. 2.

(e) Numb. xxvi. 53, &c.

* *Josephus*, in the Speech, which he introduces *Joshua* making to the *Reubenites*, &c. at their Parting, concludes with these Words:——“ But, I pray ye, let no Distance of Place set Limits to our Friendship. The Interposition of *Rivers* must never divide our Affections; for, on which Bank soever, we are all *Hebrews* still. *Abraham* was the common Father of us all, let our Abode be where it will. It was from one and the same God, that all our Forefathers receiv'd their Being; and that God we are all to worship, according to the Ordinances and Insti-

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with many sincere Wishes for their Prosperity and Welfare, * he sent them away; but they had not been long gone, before a sad Misunderstanding had like to have happen'd between them and the other Tribes.

UPON their Arrival on the other Side of *Jordan*, they erected an Altar near the Place, where they and their Brethren had miraculously pass'd over, not for any religious Use, but as a *Memorial* to succeeding Generations, that, tho' they were parted by the River, yet they were of the same Extract and Religion, and held an equal Right to the *Tabernacle* at *Shiloh*, and to the Worship of God perform'd there, that the Inhabitants of the other Side had. But, whether those on the other Side were misinform'd, or misapprehended their Intent, so it was, that they fell into a violent Rage against them, as *Apostates* from the true Religion; and immediately took up Arms for the Vindication of the Worship and Religion of their Forefathers, and to avenge the Cause of God upon the Heads and chief Authors of this Defection. But, before they proceeded to these Extremities, they were advis'd by their Rulers to suspend the Execution of their Wrath, until

they had sent a Deputation to them in order to know the Reason of their building such an Altar; which accordingly they did, and made choice of *Phineas*, the Son of *Eleazar*, with ten other Persons of eminent Distinction, to go upon the Embassy. As soon as they were come into the Land † of *Gilead*, * they represented the great Surprise, that the rest of the Tribes were in at their building this Altar; and told them very roundly, that they fear'd it portended a Defection into *Idolatry*. To dissuade them therefore from *that*, they put them in mind of the Calamities, which God had formerly sent upon them for their Worship of *Baal-peor*; and that, if so lately he had been so severe upon them for the Offence of one Man, *viz. Achan* only, what might they not expect, when two Tribes and an half were going to make a general Revolt? And, as they suspected that the Absence of the *Tabernacle* might give some Occasion to this Innovation, they invited them to come, and live among them, where they might not want an Opportunity of serving God, according to the Custom of their Ancestors.

CONCERN'D to hear the ill Opinion, which their Brethren had thus conceiv'd of

tutions left us by *Moses*. So long as we stand firm to that Way of Religion, we may be sure of the Favour and Protection of that God, for our Comfort; but, whenever you apostatize into an Hankering after *strange Gods*, the God of your Fathers will cast you off." *Jewish Antiquities*, Lib. 5. c. 1.

* The *Chronicon Samaritanum* (if we may believe what it reports, page 92, 93.) tells us, that when *Joshua* sent the *Reubenites* away, he appointed *Nephtali* to be his Deputy on the other Side of *Jordan*; that he clothed him with a royal Robe, put a Crown on his Head, and made him ride on an Horse of State, whilst a Cryer went before him, proclaiming, *This is the King of the two Tribes and an Half, the President of Justice, the Director of Affairs, and the General in the Camp: Let his Determination be conclusive. In all difficult Causes let him desire an Answer from Eleazar, the High-Priest; and, if any one shall contradict his Sentence, or withdraw from his Allegiance, it shall be lawful for any one to kill that Man, and the whole Congregation shall be blameless.*

† *Gilead*, which took its Name from *Gilead*, the Son of *Machir*, and Grandson of *Manassah*, is often put for the whole Country, that lies on the East-Side of *Jordan*, which the Children of *Israel* took from the *Moabites* and *Midianites*, &c.

* *Josephus* makes *Phineas* the Speaker upon this Occasion, who delivers his Commission in Words to this Effect: "We are very sensible, that the Crime, charg'd upon you at present, is too heinous to be punish'd by Words only; but we have not taken up Arms (Hand over Head) to execute a Vengeance according to the Degree of the Iniquity: For it is out of Respect to our Allies, and in Hopes that second, and sounder Thoughts may bring you to better Reason, that we are engag'd upon this Embassy, and speak in this Assembly. We do but desire to be sincerely inform'd, upon what Motives, and with what Design you have now rais'd this Altar. If you have done it out of any pious End, we have no Quarrel with you; but if you are gone over to a false Worship, it is for our God, and our Religion, that we must draw our Swords against you. We speak our Fears; for, we cannot think it credible yet, that a People, so well instructed in the Will, and in the Laws of God, our Friends and Allies, that we have but just now parted with; a People, newly establish'd in the Lot of a plentiful Possession by God's special Grace and Providence; we cannot, I say, believe you to be so insensible and ungrateful, as to abandon the holy Tabernacle, the Ark, the Altar, and the Worship of your Forefathers, to join with the *Canaanites* in the Worship of false Gods: Or if unhappily you should have been so misled, do but repent, and disclaim your Error, and return to that Reverence, you owe to the Laws of God, and of your Country, and you shall be still receiv'd, &c." *Jewish Antiquities*, Lib. 5. c. 1.

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of them, the *Reubenites*, *Gadites*, and *Manassites* * protested their Innocence of any *idolatrous* Intention, and made a solemn Appeal to God, that so far were they from setting up any Altar, in Opposition to *his*, that the only Design of that Structure was, to perpetuate their Title to the Service of the Tabernacle, and to prevent their latest Posterity from being excluded from it. Which when *Phineas* and the rest of the Deputies heard, they express'd no small Satisfaction; and as they related the Account of the whole Matter upon their Return, the People were infinitely pleas'd with the Result of their Embassy, and chang'd their angry Thoughts of War into the tender Affections of brotherly Love, and Peace: While the *Reubenites*, on the other Hand, to take away all farther Umbrage of Suspicion, call'd the Altar by the Name of *Ed*, as being intended for a standing *Witness* (for so the Word signifies) that, tho' they liv'd at a Distance from the rest of their Brethren, yet had they both but one Origin, and one God, who was the common God and Father of all *Israel*.

THUS were the *Israelites*, on both Sides of the River *Jordan*, settled in a quiet Possession of their Conquests; when *Joshua*,

being now grown old, and perceiving the Time of his Death approaching, call'd a general Assembly of the *Princes* and *Magistrates*, and as many of the common People, as could be got together upon this Occasion, to *Shechem*; and having, in a very tender and affectionate Speech, enumerated the many Blessings, which God's Providence had bestow'd upon them and their Ancestors; how he had preserv'd them in all their Dangers and Distresses; and reliev'd them in all their Wants; had made them victorious over all their Enemies, and, from a mean Beginning, rais'd them to the highest Degree of Reputation, and brought them into the quiet Possession of a Land, that aboundeth with all Manner of Plenty; in Gratitude to so great a Protector and Benefactor, he exhorted them to a faithful Observance of his Laws, and invited them to a solemn Renewal of the *Covenant*, which their Forefathers had made with him. Which when they had done, he not only recorded the *Covenant* in the *Book of the Law*, but set up a great Stone likewise, under an Oak, near a Place of religious Worship, as a Testimony against them, in case they should prevaricate from God's Service; and being now in the hundred and tenth Year of his Age, *

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to the End.

not

* If we can suppose any Truth in the *Samaritan* Tradition, *Nepht*, who is said to have been *Joshua's* Lieutenant over the two Tribes and a Half, may very properly be thought the Person, who answer'd *Phineas* in the Words, which *Josephus* thus puts in his Mouth: ——— “ We are not conscious of having ever departed from your Alliance, “ neither are we, in any Sort, guilty of that Affectation of Novelty in erecting this Altar, which is now charg'd upon “ us. We know but one God, and that God is the God of all the *Hebrews*; and but one Altar, which is the “ Brazen Altar before the Tabernacle. As for this Altar here, which we are suspected for, it was never intended “ for any religious Use, but only for a civil Memorial to future Times of our Friendship and Alliance, and rather to “ keep us steady in our antient Religion, than to be any ways introductive to the Violation of it. We can safely “ appeal to God, that we had no such Thought in setting up this Altar, as is imputed to us: And therefore, let us “ intreat you to have a better Opinion of your Brethren for the future, than to think us guilty of so mortal an Apostacy from the Rites and Customs of our Progenitors, a Sin not to be expiated, in any of the Sons of *Abraham*, “ but with the Loss of his Life.” *Jewish Antiquities*, Lib. 5. c. 1.

* *Jesus* the Son of *Sirach* gives us a long Commendation of *Joshua*, *Ecclus.* xlv. 1, &c. but *Josephus* is more concise in his Character, where he tells us, ——— “ That he was a Man of political Prudence, and endued also with a “ singular Felicity of popular Eloquence in expressing his Thoughts; brave, and indefatigable in War; and no less “ just and dextrous in Peace; and, in short, that he was a Person qualified for all great Purposes.” He is generally reputed to be the Author of the Book that goes under his Name. In the 26th Verse of the last Chapter, it is expressly said, that he wrote these Things. *Ecclus.* xlv. 1. The Son of *Sirach*, has made him Successor to *Moses* in the prophetic Ministry. And both the Church and Synagogue have all along look'd upon the Book as Canonical. The Truth is, *Joshua* was the only sacred Penman, we know of, that the *Israelites* had in his Age. After he had finish'd the Division of the Land, 'tis said, chap. xxiii. 1. that he had many Years of great Leisure, which he very probably employ'd in giving an Account of the Death and Burial of *Moses* and *Eleazar*, and from thence continu'd a Narrative of what had been transacted under his own Administration, filling it up with a general Terrier of the Settlements of the Tribes, which was highly expedient for the *Israelites* to have recorded, in order to prevent Confusions about their Inheritances in future Ages. Now if this Supposition be right, the Work of *Joshua* must begin where that of *Moses* ended,

The Speech,
and Death of
Joshua and *E-*
leazar, and
the Interment
of *Joseph's*
Bones.

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not long after this he died, and was bury'd at *Tinnab-serah*, in Mount *Ephraim*, a Place which the *Israelites*, in Acknowledgment of his great Services, had given him.

In a short Time after, *Eleazar* the Son of *Aaron* the Priest, who liv'd near *Joshua*, and died soon after him, was buried not far from him, in one of the Hills of *Ephraim*, † a Place, which the *Israelites* had in like Manner presented him with, and which afterwards descended to *Phineas*, his Son, and Successor in the Priesthood.

And as the Funerals of these two great Men, so near the same Time and Place, call'd to Remembrance the Bones of *Joseph*, which, at his Request, * had been brought out of *Egypt*, but not yet interr'd; the two Tribes of *Ephraim* and *Manasseh* took this Opportunity to perform their Obsequies to the Remains of their great Progenitor, in a Parcel of Ground near *Shechem*, which *Jacob* having formerly bought, had (f) given to his Son *Joseph*, and was now become the Inheritance of his Posterity.

From Josh. i.
to the End.

The OBJECTION.

“ *JOSHUA*, no doubt, was a very
“ expert *General*, and the Success of
“ his Arms against the *Canaanites* makes
“ no mean Figure in History; but a
“ great deal of this may be resolv'd into
“ the Treachery and Perfidiousness, the
“ Folly and Infatuation of those, that
“ pretend to oppose him. How despic-

“ ble an Instrument soever an *Harlot* may
“ be, yet certainly *Rahab* stood *Joshua*
“ in no small stead, when she conceal'd
“ the Spies, and (as we may suppose)
“ help'd them to the best Intelligence
“ that she could. In the New Testament
“ indeed, she is rank'd among very good
“ Company, and her Character and Com-
“ mendation

ended, viz. at the xxxivth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, and ended at the 27th Verse of the xxivth Chapter of *Joshua*. For as *Joshua*, at the End of *Deuteronomy*, added an Account of *Moses*'s Death; so what we find from the 28th Verse of the xxivth Chapter of *Joshua* to the End of that Book was unquestionably not written until *Joshua* and all the Elders his Contemporaries were gone off the Stage, and was therefore added to End the Book of *Joshua* by some sacred Penman, (most probably by *Samuel*) who was afterwards employ'd to record the subsequent State of Affairs of *Israel*. *Shuckford*'s Connection, Vol. III. Lib. 12. and *Patrick*'s Commentary, on Josh. xxiv. 33. But there is the like certainty of another Book of *Joshua*'s, which the *Samaritans* preserve with much Respect, and make great Use of, in the Support of their Pretensions against the *Jews*; neither can we tell, whether *Joshua* was the Author of that Prayer, which the *Jews* repeat as oft as they go into the Synagogues, and begins thus, ——— *It is our Duty to praise the Lord of the Universe, and to celebrate the Creation of the World; for he hath not made us like unto the Nations of the Earth, but hath prepared for us an Inheritance infinitely richer and greater, &c.* *Wagenfeil*'s *Tela Ignea Satanae*, page 223. and *Calmer*'s Dictionary, under the Word.

† This Place is, in the *Hebrew*, call'd the Hill of *Phineas*, it being customary in those Days for Men to call Places by the Names of their eldest Son. But then the Question is, To whom did the *Israelites* give this Hill? The most probable Answer is, That they gave it to *Eleazar*; for, he being the High-Priest, at the Time of the Division of the Land, they thought proper to give him a peculiar Portion, distinct from other Cities of the Priests, which were all in the Tribes of *Judah*, *Benjamin*, and *Simeon*, and none in the Tribe of *Ephraim*, Josh. xxi. 9, 17, 19. And they made Choice of this Country the rather, that he might be near the Tabernacle, which was at *Shiloh*, and near to *Joshua*, who liv'd at *Shechem*, to be ready, on all Occasions, to advise him, and consult the Oracle for him. But then against this, there lies an Objection, viz. that no *Levite* or *Priest* was to have any Portion in the Division of the Land; and therefore it is a receiv'd Opinion among the *Jews*, that either *Eleazar*, or *Phineas* had this Inheritance in Right of his Wife: Tho' we cannot see, why the High-Priest especially, who was certainly the second Person in the Government, might not have a Mansion-House, and some Domains allotted him, for the greater State and Dignity of his Living, without any great Infringement upon the general Laws. *Patrick*'s Commentary, on Josh. xxiv. 33.

* It may reasonably be thought, that the Bodies of the rest of the Sons of *Jacob*, from whom the Twelve Tribes descended, were brought into *Canaan*, to be there interr'd, as *Josephus* relates from ancient Tradition, *Antiquities*, Lib. 2. c. 4. and as *St Stephen* confirms it, *Acts* vii. 16. For tho' *Joseph* excell'd them all in Dignity, and gave this special Charge about his Body, yet every Tribe, no doubt, had as great a Regard for their Progenitor, and would be inclin'd to do the same for their Fathers, that *Joseph*'s Descendants did for him: But whether they bury'd them in the Sepulchre of *Machpelah*, or in some eminent Place in their own Tribe, as *Joseph* was, there is no one, that gives us any Account. *Patrick*'s Commentary, on Josh. xxiv. 32.

(f) Gen. xlviii. 22.

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“ mendment (g) is twice commemorated,
“ but for what Reason we cannot tell,
“ unless it be (h) for lying to the Govern-
“ ment, and betraying her Country into
“ the Hands of its most cruel Enemies;
“ which is surely an Example, that de-
“ serves our Detestation rather than
“ Praise.

“ THE *Israelites* were commanded by
“ God (whose Injunctions we are not to
“ dispute) (i) to have no Mercy upon the
“ Inhabitants of *Canaan*, but to smite and
“ utterly destroy them; and therefore it
“ looks like mere Madness and Infatua-
“ tion, that a People, who knew them-
“ selves devoted to Destruction, (instead
“ of going over to the Enemy, or oppo-
“ sing them by *Piece-meals*) did not con-
“ federate all together, either to expel
“ those Invaders from their Countries, or
“ to sell their Lives and Liberties at as
“ dear a Price as possible.

“ SOME of these Nations were account-
“ ed a bold and warlike People; but cer-
“ tainly the Inhabitants of *Jericho* acted
“ like mere *Pultrons*, when they coop’d
“ themselves up within the Walls of the
“ City, and never once thought of dis-
“ puting the Pass over the River *Jordan*.
“ For, whatever we may talk of that
“ wonderful Passage, ’tis evident (k) from
“ the Testimony of Travellers, that the
“ River was no more than a Brook in
“ Comparison, and fordable in several
“ Places, as (l) the Scripture itself allows.
“ But even suppose it was not, ’tis no
“ uncommon Thing, (m) in History to
“ read of Rivers, larger than this, by the
“ Force of some contrary Wind, driven
“ back, and their Channels laid dry.

“ FOR a People observant of his Laws,
“ God no doubt will, and often does,
“ work Wonders, in order to give them
“ an Advantage over their Enemies; but
“ it is hard to conceive, what Reason
“ there should be for exerting any mira-
“ culous Power in Behalf of those, who,

“ as if asham’d of the Covenant made ^{From Josh. i.}
“ with their Forefather *Abraham*, had ^{to the End.}
“ now omitted the Sacrament of *Circum-*
“ *cision* so long; and, in a short Time
“ after, had no manner of Regard to God’s
“ *Sabbath*, when they went founding their
“ Horns about *Jericho*, or rather (as some
“ think) assaulted the Town, and imbru’d
“ their Hands in the Blood of so many
“ *Innocents*, on that sacred Day.

“ INSTEAD of *Rams-Horns*, which
“ are a little improper, one would think,
“ to make *musical* Instruments of, a Sol-
“ dier would be tempted to say, that the
“ *Israelites* made use of *Battering-Rams*
“ upon this Occasion: But those, who
“ have study’d the Philosophy of Sounds,
“ will tell us, that they have a certain
“ natural Fitness to break and demolish
“ solid Bodies; or, if this was not the
“ Case, from the violent Effects of sub-
“ terraneous Eruptions, or the blowing up
“ some Magazines of Powder, one would
“ really imagine, that the Fall of the Walls
“ of *Jericho* was occasion’d by some natu-
“ ral Cause.

“ *JOSHUA*, as an old experienc’d
“ General, was doubtless Master of many
“ Stratagems, which the ignorant Herd
“ knew nothing of; and therefore he
“ might give the Word of Command for
“ them to *shout aloud*, when, at the same
“ Time, he order’d the Match to be laid
“ to the *Train*, that led to the *Mine* under
“ the Walls, and so they, poor Creatures
“ might imagine, that it was either their
“ Noise, or some miraculous Stroke, that
“ made them fall; when, in *reality*, the
“ whole was affected by nothing else, but
“ some new Device in War. But by
“ what Means soever he vanquish’d the
“ City, it seems a little extravagant, if not
“ brutal in him, after he had laid it in
“ Ashes, to load it with such heavy Im-
“ precations, when he had lost no Men,
“ and met with so little Molestation in
“ taking it.

7 O

“ WHAT

(g) Heb. xi. 31. and Jam. ii. 25.

(h) Christianity as old as the Creation, p. 263.

(i) Deut. vii. 2.

(k) *Sandy’s Travels*, lib. iii. p. 141.

(l) Josh. ii. 7.

(m) Vid. *Pliny’s Hist.* lib. ii. Cap. 102. *Diogenes**Malicarn.* Antiq. Roman. Lib. vi. p. 351. and Lib. vii. p. 409.

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“ W H A T the mysterious Oracle of
“ *Urim* and *Thummim* may be, 'tis past
“ the Skill of Man perhaps to know; but,
“ be it what it will, it seems to have done
“ the *Israelites* no great Service, when it
“ could not hinder *Joshua* and the other
“ Princes, no not even *Eleazar* himself,
“ who wore it, from being impos'd on by
“ the *Gibeonites*. The *Gibeonites* indeed
“ acted the crafty Part, and, since it was
“ to save themselves, were not much to be
“ discommended; but certainly the *Isra-*
“ *elites* might have known better, than to
“ think themselves bound by an Oath,
“ that was not only drawn from them by
“ *Wile* and *Artifice*, but was repugnant
“ likewise to that divine Injunction, which
“ *previously* oblig'd them to extirpate all
“ the *Canaanites*, even tho' they su'd for
“ Peace never so earnestly, and (m) to
“ make no Covenant with them, even tho'
“ they offer'd to become *Profelytes* never
“ so sincerely.

“ T H E *Israelites* indeed, according to
“ the Representation which *Joshua* gives
“ us of them, were at the best but a giddy,
“ thoughtless Kind of People, elated with
“ Successes, dejected with any Misfortunes,
“ and wild and boisterous in the Prosecu-
“ tion of their Passions; for, to insult over
“ one poor City with Imprecations and
“ Curses, when it already lay in Ashes,
“ (as was the Case at *Jericho*) to droop in
“ their Courage, and utterly despond,
“ upon a small Defeat given them at *ano-*
“ *ther*, (as was the Case of *Ai*) and to fly
“ into a Flame, take up Arms, and vow
“ Revenge, tho' they knew not well for
“ what, (as was the Case between them
“ and their Brethren beyond *Jordan*)
“ argues such a Baseness of Mind, and
“ Barbarity of Temper, and Rudeness of
“ Manners, as but badly become the elect
“ People of God.

(m) Deut. vii. 2, &c.

* It was the Expression of *Alexander the Great*, that he would not *steal a Victory*. The ancient *Greeks* gave Notice to their Enemies, when, and where they should engage them. The old *Romans* knew not what Cunning and subtle Wiles in carrying on War meant: *Non Fraude, neque oculis, sed palàm, & Armatum Populum Romanum Hostes suos ulisci*. They sought Victory only by Force and honest Fighting, desiring that their Enemies might be convinc'd of their Valour, and submit to them without Regret, because they were the stronger. *Calmet's Commentary*, on *Josh. viii.*

(n) Josh. i. 4.

(o) Ibid. xxiv. 25, 26.

“ B U T well may the Author of this
“ Book make thus free with his People,
“ when he is not afraid to record such
“ Things, as cannot but reflect Dishonour
“ upon the sacred Attributes of God him-
“ self. *Achan* indeed was a wicked Man
“ in purloining some Part of the Plunder
“ to himself; but what had his poor
“ Children done, that they must be com-
“ mitted to the same Flames? The City
“ of *Ai* had given the *Israelites* some
“ Molestation, and was to be subdu'd at
“ all Adventures; but what Necessity was
“ there for God to make use of Stratagem
“ and Artifice (Means, which seem below
“ the Greatness of the Almighty, and *
“ which some Nations and Generals have
“ rejected, as unworthy brave Men) to
“ give the Victory to his own Creatures.

“ T O these People of his indeed he
“ had been very kind, in giving them
“ what he did of the Land of *Canaan*;
“ but since his Promise extended to the
“ whole, since (n) from the *Wildernefs*,
“ and this *Lebanon*, unto the great River
“ *Euphrates*, all the Land of the *Hittites*,
“ and unto the great Sea, towards the going
“ down of the Sun (as he assur'd *Joshua*)
“ was to be their Coast, it looks a little
“ strange, that God should falsify his
“ Promise, (for all these Territories they
“ never possess'd) and thus cut them
“ short.

“ O T H E R Slips in our Author may be
“ excusable; his talking of the (o) Sanc-
“ tuary's being at *Shechem*, when indis-
“ putably it was at *Shiloh*, may charitably
“ be imputed to some small Defect of
“ Memory; but it really shocks one, and
“ is enough to impeach the Authority of
“ the Book itself, to find recorded in it
“ such Passages, as seem to leave an Impu-
“ tation of Cruelty, Craft, and Breach of
“ Promise

From Josh. i.
to the End.

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“ Promise upon God; whom all Man-kind must allow to be the Fountain and Foundation of all Honour, Truth, and Goodness.”

Answered, by
shewing the
Reason why
the Canaanites
made no better
Defence.

(p) *WHO is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders? Thou, in thy Mercy, hast led forth the People, whom thou hast redeemed; thou hast guided them, in thy Strength, unto thy holy Habitation. The People shall hear, and shall be afraid; Sorrow shall take hold on the Inhabitants of Palestina. The Elders of Edom shall be amaz'd; the mighty Men of Moab shall tremble, and all the Inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear, and Dread shall fall upon them. By the Greatness of thy Arm they shall be as still as a Stone, till thy People pass over, O Lord, till thy People pass over, whom thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the Mountain of thine Inheritance, in the Place, O Lord, which thou hast made for them to dwell in; in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy Hand hath established.*

THESE Words are Part of that triumphant Song, which *Moses* made, upon the Destruction of the *Egyptians* in the *Red-Sea*. They are plain Predictions of what befel the *Israelites* forty Years after, and a Declaration they are, that the Conquest of their Country was, not only by the Order and Appointment, but by the immediate Help and Assistance of God; (q) for (as the Psalmist expresses it) *they got not the Land in Possession thro' their own Sword, neither was it their own Arm that helped them; but thy right Hand, and thine Arm, and the Light of thy Countenance, because thou hast a Favour unto them.* And, if God so immediately concern'd himself in the Conquest of the Country, we need not wonder, that we hear of the People, who were to defend it, being *amaz'd* and *trembling*, and *melting away for Fear*. The *Jewish* Doctors have a Tradition, that the vast Heaps of Waters, pil'd upon one

another, while the *Israelites* pass'd over the River *Jordan*, being seen by the People of *Jericho*, and other adjacent Places, occasion'd so general a Consternation, that they never once thought of maintaining the Pass. And indeed their Consternation must have been very great, when we find them enclosing themselves within their Walls, and suffering the *Israelites* to surround them seven Days successively, without even once attempting to make a Sally. They saw, in short, that a Power, superior to all human Opposition, was engag'd against them; and therefore whatever prior Measures they had taken for their mutual Defence, upon the Approach of an Army, commanded by one, who, when he pleases, (r) *maketh the Devices of the People ineffectual, and casteth out the Counsels of Princes*, they were all broken and disconcerted.

From Josh. i.
to the End.

It cannot be deny'd indeed, but that, in antient Times, there was a great Affinity between the Business of an *Hostess*, and an *Harlot*. Those, who kept *Inns*, or publick Houses for the Entertainment of Strangers, made no Scruple of prostituting their Bodies: And for this Reason perhaps it is, that, in the *Hebrew* Tongue, there is but one Word, *viz. Zonah*, to denote Persons of both Professions. For this Reason very likely it was, that the *Septuagint*, speaking of *Rahab*, give her the Appellation of an *Harlot*, and (as the *Septuagint* was, at this Time, the common Translation of the *Jews*) for this very Reason, the two Apostles, (s) *St Paul*, and (t) *St James*, as they found it in the Translation, might make use of the same Expression. It is to be observ'd however, that, as the Expression is capable of another Sense, the *Chaldee* Paraphrast calls her by a Word, which comes from the *Greek* *ἡανδοχευρία* or a *Woman that kept a publick House*, without any Work of Infamy; and therefore Charity should incline us to think the best of a Person, whom both these Apostles have rank'd with *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, and propounded as an Example

Rahab not an
Harlot.

(p) Exod. xv. 11. &c.

(q) Psal. xlv. 3, 4.

(r) Ibid. xxxiii. 10.

(s) Heb. xi. 31.

(t) Jam. ii. 25.

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Example of Faith and good Works; who was admitted into the Society of God's People; marry'd into a † noble Family of the Tribe of *Judah*; and of whose Posterity *Christ*, the Saviour of the World, was born.

Nor blameable
for imposing on
the King's Of-
ficers.

To save the Lives of the Innocent is certainly a very commendable Thing; but whether it may be done by the Help of Diffimulation and Falshood, or whether *Rahab*, in concealing the Spies, and pretending to the King's Messengers, that they were just gone, did not incur the Sin of wilful Lying, is a Question not so very easy to be resolv'd. Men, as they are Members of a *Civil* Society, have certainly a *Right* to Truth, and the very Design of *Speech* is to be the Conveyance of our real Sentiments to one another; but some *Casuits* are of Opinion, that Circumstances may so happen, as to make it both lawful and necessary, not only to disguise the Truth, but to impose upon others by a false Information. Suppose a *Madman*, for Instance, with a drawn Sword in his Hand, should pursue a Friend of mine, with a full Intent to kill him; and my Friend, by the Benefit of some short Turning, gives him the *Drop*, so that, having lost Sight of him, he comes and demands of me, which Way he took; but I, instead of setting him right, point the Assassin another Way: In this Case, I presume, I commit no Crime, because the Man, in these Circumstances, has forfeited all Right to Truth, nor could I indeed impart it to him, without making myself instrumental to my Friend's Murther. This, in a great Measure, was *Rahab's* Case. Her Design was, to save the Spies from the Hands of those, that were sent to apprehend them, but in vain had she form'd such a Design, unless she was resolv'd to put it in Execution; and yet, what other Way had she of executing it, but by telling a Lye? It had been to no Purpose for her to have hid them on the

Roof of her House, if, for the Sake of Truth, she had thought herself oblig'd to discover the Place of their Concealment; if her Silence had given any Umbrage of Suspicion to their Pursuers; if she had not, in short, by a bold Assertion, diverted their Enquiry some other Way. In this Case the Design of the Means of executing it were inseparable. And yet, since a Design, which could no ways be executed without the Help of a Lye, is both prais'd and propos'd in Scripture, as a Pattern for the Church to imitate, what Right have we to condemn it? Or, upon what Presumption can we imagine, that *Rahab* would have acted more agreeably to the Mind of God, in discovering the Spies out of Respect to Truth, than she did, in preserving them by Virtue of a feign'd Story? But there is another Way of accounting for *Rahab's* Conduct, and that is this — (u) The Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* informs us, that (x) *by Faith she perish'd not with them that believ'd not, when she had receiv'd the Spies with Peace*; where the Greek Words are not τοῖς ἀπίστοις, with the Unbelievers, but τοῖς ἀπειθήσασι, with the disobedient, or those that were not persuaded of the Truth of what was told them. But how the Inhabitants of *Jericho* can be said to be convinc'd or disobedient, if God had reveal'd nothing to them, or requir'd nothing of them, we cannot conceive. Some Information must have been given both to them and *Rahab*, otherwise they could not be condemn'd for Disobedience, nor she commended for her *Faith*, i. e. for believing, and acting, according to the Will of God, made known unto her. Upon the Supposition then, that the Design of God towards the Inhabitants of *Canaan* was some way or other reveal'd to the King, and People of *Jericho*, and both he and they had been sufficiently warn'd to save themselves from the Destruction that was coming upon them, if they would not obey, but if *Rahab*

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† *Rahab* marry'd *Salmon*, a Prince of *Judah*, by whom she had *Boaz*. *Boaz* was Father of *Obed*, *Obed* of *Jesse*, and *Jesse* of King *David*: So that *Jesus Christ* did not disdain to reckon this *Canaanitish* Woman among his Ancestors. *Calmer's Dictionary*.

(u) *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. III. Lib. xii.

(x) *Heb. xi. 31.*

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Rahab did, and acted conformably to the Information that was given her, her whole Behaviour will not only stand clear of every criminal Imputation, but be highly commendable, and justly deserve a Rank among those illustrious Patterns, which the *Apostle* proposes to our Imitation, as being a Person justify'd not only by her *Faith*, (y) but her *Works* likewise, when she receiv'd the Messengers, and sent them out another way.

And taking
Part against
her own Coun-
try.

THE Declaration, which their kind Protectress makes to them, (z) *I know that the Lord hath given you the Land, and that your Terror is fallen upon us, and that all the Inhabitants of the Land faint because of you, for the Lord your God he is God in Heaven above, and in Earth beneath,* bespeaks the full Persuasion of her Mind; and therefore, not doubting, but that the Ruler of the Universe had an uncontrollable Right to dispose of all Kingdoms and Countries according to his good Pleasure, she judg'd it reasonable to obey God rather than Man, and thereupon endeavour'd, as much as in her lay, to deliver up the Land to the true Owners, to those, whom God, by his Donation, had made its rightful Proprietors.

AN Order from Heaven most certainly releases the Subject from his Allegiance to his Prince, and the Citizen from the Engagement, he lies under to those, that are of the same Society: And therefore *Rahab*, having such an Order, (or, at least what was equivalent to it) was at full Liberty to espouse what Party she pleas'd, and must have been perfidious to God, and forgetful of her own Preservation, if she had acted otherwise than she did. For (a) even setting aside her *Faith*, (for which she is so justly commended in the Gospel) if she had heard of the Destruction of *Pharaoh* in Egypt, and of the other two Kings on the East Side of Jordan, the King of *Jericho* can hardly be suppos'd to be ignorant of their Fate: And therefore it was as natural for her to be terrify'd at it, and

to provide for her Safety, as it was for him to make a brave Resistance, or perish in the Attempt. If therefore what the Scripture seems to intimate be true, viz. that *Joshua* was oblig'd to offer Peace, before he made use of the Sword against any of the *Canaanitish* Nations; it was as lawful for her, or any other Subject, to accept this Peace, as it was glorious perhaps for a Monarch to refuse it. At least we cannot but think, that the Refusal of such advantageous Terms from an irresistible Conqueror, at the Risque of being all infallibly massacred by him, for the Sake of a King, who (for ought that appears to the contrary) might be a petty Tyrant, or for the Sake of a People, whom Fear had render'd incapable of making any tolerable Resistance; when perhaps the Difference of being under the natural Monarch, (if he was really such) or the Conqueror, was inconsiderable, or (it may be) on the Side of the latter: We cannot but think, I say, that such a Refusal would have been an Instance of Patriotism, not to be expected from a *Canaanite*, and, much less, from such a young Hostess, as *Rahab* must have been, since we read of her being the Mother of *Boaz*, above thirty Years after this. So that, upon the whole, she acted a Part, that might naturally be expected from her, no ways inglorious in itself, and highly agreeable to the Will of God, when she adjoin'd herself to those, who, by his Almighty Arm, were so visibly supported; and abandon'd the Interest of those, who, upon so many Accounts, were very justly devoted to Destruction.

From Josh. i.
to the End.

W H A T the Spirit says unto the Church at *Thyatira*, (b) *I gave her Space to repent of her Fornication, but she repented not; Behold, I will cast her into a Bed, and them that commit Adultery with her into great Tribulation, and I will kill her Children with Death, and give unto every one according to his Works,* is very applicable to the several Nations in the Land of *Canaan*. Four hundred Years were to

Reasons for
God's treating
the Canaanites
so severely.

NUMB. XXXIX.

7 P

intervene

(y) Jam. ii. 25.

(z) Josh. ii. 9, 11.

(a) Univers. Hist. lib. i. c. 7.

(b) Revel. ii. 21, &c.

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intervene between the Commencement of the Promise to *Abraham*, and this Completion of it; and the Reason, which God gives for this long Delay, is, that (c) *the Iniquity of the Amorites* (and by the *Amorites*, he means all the other Nations of *Canaan*) *was not yet full*: And (d) *even tho'* (as the Author of the Book of Wisdom argues) *he could have destroyed them all with one rough Word, yet, executing his Judgments by little and little, he gave them Place of Repentance, not being ignorant that they were an naughty Generation, and that their Malice was bred in them, and their Cogitation would never be changed.* For instead of reforming, the only Effect, which this Delay had, was, to make them more confirm'd in Wickedness, and because (e) *this Sentence against their evil Works was not speedily executed*, therefore were *their Hearts the fuller set in them to do Evil.*

WHAT the Nature and Heinousness of their Iniquities were, we may best learn (from (f) the many Precautions, which God gives his People against them; *for he hated them* (as the (g) same Author has drawn up the Articles of Accusation against them) *for doing most odious Works of Witchcraft, and wicked Sacrifices, for their merciless murdering of Children, devouring of Man's Flesh, and feasting upon Blood*; and if we may suppose, that God, some way or other, had given these Nations sufficient Notice of his intended Severity against them if they did not repent; had abundant Reason to preserve his own Peo-

ple from the Infection of the *Abominations*; and, before their Extirpation was executed, did, (h) by his Servant *Joshua*, offer them Conditions of Peace: Tho' the divine Counsels are a Secret to us, yet, (even upon this Face of Things) we cannot find any Fault with his Treatment of them, since, when he had given them *Space to repent, and they repented not*, his Justice was certainly then at Liberty to take what Vengeance his divine Wisdom should think fit.

AND indeed this seems to be one of the Reasons, why God divided the River for the *Israelites*, who were to be the Instruments of this his Vengeance, to pass over, viz. That thereby he might inject a Terror into the Inhabitants of *Canaan*, and so facilitate the Conquest of their Country. On the Side of *Jordan*, the Kings of the Neighbourhood fear'd no Invasion. The Depth of the River (especially at the Time of its Overflowing, which was in the *Harvest* when the *Israelites* (i) pass'd it) was Barrier sufficient, they thought, against all that the *Israelites* could do. For, in those Days, *Pontoons* were Things never heard of in military Expeditions; and the * Stream is (even at this Day) allow'd to be too fierce and rapid for any one to swim over: And therefore, as they expected no Danger from that Quarter, and might for that Reason draw out no Forces to defend that Side of their Frontier; so the sacred Historian has taken care to inform us, that (k) *when all the Kings of the Amorites, which were on the Side of Jordan westward,*
and

(c) Gen. xv. 16.

(d) Wisd. xii. 9, 10.

(e) Ecclef. viii. 11.

(f) Vide Lev. xviii. 4. Deut.

ix. 4, &c.

(g) Wisd. xii. 4, 5.

(h) Deut. xx. 10, 11. Josh. xi. 19.

(i) Josh. iii. 15.

1 Chron. xii. 15. and Ecclef. xxiv. 26.

* That the sacred Writings do constantly represent this River as not fordable, except at some particular Places, very probably made by Art, that the Countries on each Side may have a freer Communication, is plain from the Passages, to which these several Citations *Josh. ii. 2. Judg. iii. 28. and xii. 5. 2 Kings ii. 14.* do refer. That it was not a poor and inconsiderable Stream, such as some have represented it, is evident from the Account of *Thevenot* (in his *Travels*, page 193) who himself went near the Place, where the *Israelites* pass'd over, and describes it to be "half as broad as the *Seine* at *Paris*, very deep, and very rapid; which agrees very well with what *Maunderell* (in his *Journey from Aleppo*, p. 83.) says of it, viz. "That its Channel is twenty Yards over, deeper than a Man's Height, and runs with such a Current, that there is no swimming against it:" And that (whatever the present Condition of *Jordan* may be) 'tis certain, when the *Israelites* came into *Canaan*, it was a much larger River than now it is, for even in *Pliny's* Time, (Nat. Hist. Lib. v.) its Channel was much larger than what it now runs in, having then the Title of *Amnis Ambitiosus*; and, in the Days, when *Strabo* wrote (according to his *Geog. Lib. xvi.*) even Vessels of Burthen might navigate in it. *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. III. Lib. xii.

(k) Josh. v. 1.

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and all the Kings of the Canaanites, which were by the Sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the Waters of Jordan from before the Children of Israel, until they were passed over, their Hearts melted, neither was there Spirit in them any more.

AND as this miraculous Passage could not but fill their Enemies with Confusion, so it added, no doubt, fresh Courage to the Israelites, when they came to consider, that the same God, about forty Years before, had wrought the like Miracle for them in their Passage of the Red-Sea; that then he divided the Waves, (l) to confirm the Commission, which he had given Moses, and now had parted the Stream, to strengthen the Authority of his Successor, Joshua, and to give them Assurance, that (m) he would be with the one, as he had been with the other, and empower the latter to make good their Possession of the Land of Promise, even as he had enabled the former to accomplish their Deliverance out of the Land of Bondage.

IN all Rivers whatever, there, questionless, are some shallower Places than ordinary, or some Passages, either by Boats or Bridges, that may be called *Fords*; but that the Jordan, at this Time, was either so vastly overflown, as to render these *Fords* impassable, or that the Israelites cross'd it at Places, which the Enemy never thought of, and where none of these *Passes* were to be found, is pretty evident from the Canaanites making no Preparation to defend their Coasts on the River-side, and from the great Consternation, we find them in, when once they understood that the Jewish Army had got over. For (whatever Opinion we, at this Distance of Time, may have of the Matter) they justly inferr'd, that the Suspension of a River's Course could be effected no other

Way, than by a divine Power, either immediately acting itself, or by the Instrumentality of its Angels. And though there possibly may be some Instances in History, wherein, by the Violence of adverse Winds, the Course of Rivers has either been retarded, or * driven back; yet, as we read of no such Wind concern'd in this Event, the Prediction of Joshua, and the Promises of God concerning this Miracle, the Time in which he chose to work it, and the Analogy it bears with what before was wrought at the Red-Sea; these, and several other Circumstances, make this Transaction beyond Compare, and rank it, not only among those Prodigies, which very rarely come to pass, but among those stupendous Works, which (contrary to the Laws of Nature) the great Author and Ruler of the Universe, for the Preservation of his People, and the Manifestation of his own Glory, is sometimes observ'd to do.

(n) He, that is born in thy House, or he that is bought with thy Money, must needs be circumcised, and my Covenant shall be in your Flesh for an everlasting Covenant; and the uncircumcised Man-child, whose Flesh of his Foreskin is not circumcised, that Soul shall be cut off from his People; he hath broken my Covenant. These are the Words of the Precept, and they seem to be so very urgent and express, that one would really think the Ordinance was intended, not only for a Distinction between Jew and Gentile, but for an Institution likewise, to take away the Guilt of Original Sin. And yet, even upon this Supposition, (o) the People's frequent moving from Place to Place, the Uncertainty of their Decampments, and the Inconvenience of their Travelling, which would make it dangerous for Children to be circumcis'd before a March, might be some

From Josh. i.
to the End.

And that it
was really mi-
raculous.

(l) Saurin's Dissertation sur le Passage du Jourdain.

(m) Josh. i. 17.

* Something of this Nature seems to have happen'd in Augustus's Time, according to that known Passage in Horace:

Vidimus Fluvium Tiberim, retortis
Littore Etrusco violentè Undis,
Ire dejectum Monumentum Regis,
'Templaque Vestæ.

Lib. i. ODE II.

(n) Gen. xvii. 13, 14.

(o) Saurin's Dissert. sur la Prise de Jerico.

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some Apology for their omitting the Observation of this Rite, even though they had no divine Dispensation for it.

(p) It is one of the general Rules among the Jews, that no Precept, (always meaning no ceremonial Precept, for some Precepts there are, that were to be observ'd, even at the Expence of their Lives) whose Observation occasions Death, is to be attended to, because the Scriptures say, that *he who observeth these Laws, shall live, not die, by them.* But how frivolous soever this Reason may be, 'tis certain, that, in Case they apprehended any Danger from the Operation, they carry'd this Dispensation so far, as to exempt the next Child from having this Ordinance pass upon him, if so be that his Brother before him died of the Wound which he receiv'd in Circumcision. And, for a farther Excuse, they add, that, during their Sojourning in the Wilderness, for one Crime or other, their Forefathers were generally under the divine Displeasure, in which Condition it would have been a Prophanation of the Sacrament to have administer'd it.

BUT then, if the other Notion of this Ordinance be admitted, viz. that it was no more than a Note of Distinction between the *Israelites* and other Nations, as the *Israelites* were now alone in the Wilderness, there was no Danger of their mixing with others, and consequently less Reason for their Observation of this distinguishing Rite, until they should enter upon the Possession of a Country, where every Kind of Idolatry surrounded them on all Hands.

THUS, whether we look upon the Rite of Circumcision, as a Sacrament of Initiation into the Jewish Church, or a Character of Distinction only between them and other People, the *Israelites* might, without the Imputation of much Guilt, omit the outward Observance of it, if so be that they did but attend to what was the true Intent and Meaning of it, viz. (q) *the circumcising the Foreskin of their*

Hearts; (r) for he is not a Jew, (as St Paul excellently argues) who is one outwardly, neither is that Circumcision, which is outward in the Flesh; but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter, whose Praise is not of Men, but of God. From Josh. i. to the End.

IN like Manner, the Observation of the Sabbath-Day was a Precept of severe Injunction; but, whether the Destruction of *Jericho* happen'd on that Day, or any other of the Week, (as the *Israelites* were order'd to compass the City for seven Days successively) 'tis certain, that one of these Days must necessarily have been the Sabbath; and yet we must not suppose that they committed any great Offence in what they did, because the same Authority, which made the Law for the Observation of it, gave now a full Licence for the Prophanation of it. The Person who met *Joshua*, and prescrib'd the Form of the Siege of *Jericho*, by his Assumption of divine Honours and Appellations, was doubtless the same, who deliver'd the Law from Mount *Sinai*: And therefore we need not question, but that *now* he acted in as full Power, in suspending, (since his Orders could not be executed without such Suspension) as he *then* did in enjoining the Observation of the Sabbath; and 'tis in Allusion (as some imagine) to this very Passage, that our blessed Saviour pronounc'd that Maxim in the Gospel, (s) *the Sabbath was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath.* And the Sabbath, not observ'd.

HOWEVER this be, 'tis certain, that, before our Saviour's Days, the Jews carry'd the Observation of the Sabbath to a great Degree of Rigour. In the Time of the *Maccabees*, they would not so much as defend themselves against the Assault of their Enemies on that Day, (t) but yielded their Throats to be cut, rather than stir an Hand in their own Vindication: Whereas this Example of their Forefathers investing, if not *sacking Jericho* on the Sabbath-day, might have taught them, one would

(p) Lightfoot's Hor. Heb. in 1 Cor. vii. 19.
(q) Prideaux's Connection, Part II. Vol. IV.

(r) Deut. x. 16.

(s) Rom. ii. 28, 29.

(t) Mark ii. 27.

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would think, that, in Cases of this Nature, it was allowable, not only to defend themselves, but to prevent their Enemies annoying them; nay, even to fall upon, and destroy them, whenever a favourable Opportunity presented itself on that Day.

Why Rams-
Horns were
made use of at
the Taking of
Jericho.

IN the Conquest of *Jericho* however, some have imagined, that *Rams-horns* were not proper *Materials*, whereof to make Trumpets; that they are not so easily perforated, nor can they ever be brought to make a Sound, shrill and extensive enough for their particular Purposes; and therefore they conceive, that Brass, or Silver, or any other Metal had been more convenient for this Use; whereupon (*u*) they derive the Word *Jobel*, in the Singular, (which we render a *Ram's-Horn*) not from the *Arabick*, which signifies a *Ram*, but from *Jubal*, the Name of him, who was the first Inventor of musical Instruments: And, according to this Sense, the Trumpets, which the Priests upon this Occasion us'd, may be said to have been fashion'd according to those, which Jubal first invented.

THIS Interpretation of the Words (which is no bad one) removes all the Incongruity, that may seem to arise from the *Matter*, whereof these Trumpets were compos'd: But then, it is to be consider'd, that, as the first Instruments of this Kind were probably made of Horns, so has the Notion of the Impossibility of boring a *Ram's-Horn* been sufficiently confuted by our learned *Spencer*. The Truth is, every one knows, that in the Inside of it, there is a softer Part, which may be drawn out by Art; after which it is hollow all the Way up, except four or five Inches towards the Top, Part of which is sawed off, to make it broad enough for the Mouth, and then the rest is easily bored. But whether there is any Foundation for that Fancy of the *Jews*, that these Horns were retain'd in the Proclamation of some of their greatest Festivals, in Memory of *Isaac's* being rescued from his

Father *Abraham's* Knife by the Substitution of a *Ram* in his Stead, is a Point that we leave to the Speculations of the Curious.

From Josh. i.
to the End.

WHATEVER Materials these Trumpets were made of, it is impossible to conceive, that there should be any Power in their Sound to demolish Cities; and tho' the Noise of a great Number of People might be very loud, yet still it would require a Miracle in *Joshua* to know, what the just Proportion was between their Noise, and the Strength of the Walls of *Jericho*, since the least Deviation in this Respect would have defeated the whole Experiment.

The Taking of
it miraculous.

WHAT the Effect of Gunpowder; or of other sulphureous Matter fir'd under Ground, or in the Bowels of the Earth, is, no one, that has seen either the Springing of a Mine, or felt the Convulsions of an Earthquake, needs be told; but that no Stratagem of this Kind could be employ'd in the Siege of *Jericho*, is manifest, because the Invention of Gun-Powder is a novel Thing, nor had the *Israelites* been long enough on the western Side of *Jordan*, to have undermined its Walls, even tho' they had had the Secret of some inflammatory Stratum, to have lodged under them. On the contrary, the whole Process of this Siege (if we may so call it) was manag'd at such a Rate, as plainly discover'd an Expectance of a Miracle to be wrought: For had not this been the Case, instead of sauntering about the Walls for seven Days, they should have been working in their Trenches, and carrying on their Approaches, as we now call it.

THE Art of War was then but in its Infancy; and, as the Manner of undermining and blowing up the most ponderous Bodies was what the Ancients were unacquainted with, so was the *Battering-Ram* an Invention of a later Date than some imagine. (*x*) *Pliny* indeed seems to say, that *Epeus* first made Use of it at the Siege of *Troy*; but, in all Probability, (*y*)

Ezekiel

7 Q

(*u*) *Mustus* in Josh. vi. 4. *Bochart's* Hieros. lib. ii. c. 43. and *Cabnet* in Locum.
(*y*) Ezek. iv. 1, 2. and xxi. 22.

(*x*) Lib. vii. c. 56.

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Ezekiel is the earliest Author that mentions this Machine, and perhaps the first Time that it was employ'd was under *Nebuchadnezzar*, at the Siege of *Jerusalem*.

Joshua's cursing it no uncommon Thing.

BUT there is no need to ransack History, for the Confutation of this System, which (a) they, who propose it, do nevertheless acknowledge, that, tho' the Walls of *Jericho* might have fallen, without any extraordinary Act of the divine Power, yet, by the Circumstances of the whole Account, it appears, that this Event was altogether miraculous. Nor should *Joshua's* denouncing an *Anathema* over the vanquish'd City be thought a Thing unprecedented; or a Token of a furious and un placable Spirit, since the like Practice has been observ'd by some of the greatest Generals of other Nations; forasmuch as (a) *Agamemnon*, after he had taken *Troy*, denounc'd a Curse upon those, who should, at any Time, attempt to rebuild it; the *Romans* publish'd a Decree of *Execration* against them, who should do the like to *Carthage*; and when (b) *Crassus* had demolish'd *Sidon*, (which had been a lurking Place to the Tyrant *Glaucias*) he wish'd the greatest Evils imaginable upon the Head of that Man, who should but so much as build a Wall about the Place, where it once stood.

What the Urim and Thummim were.

OF all the Questions in the *Jewish* Schools, there is none more difficult, than what we are to understand by the *Urim* and *Thummim*, which *Moses* takes Notice of, as something belonging to the Attire of the High-Priest, and withal enabling him to give Responses to such, as by his Mediation came to consult God. (c) The two Words are variously translated; but, in the main, all the Translations amount much to the same Purport; and, as this sacred Thing (be it what it will) was to be plac'd on the High-Priest's Breast, it very properly reminded him of the great Qualifications, requisite in those of his

Order; *Light*, or Sufficiency of spiritual Knowledge; and *Perfection*, or the Virtue and Sanctity of his Life. From Josh. i. to the End.

THE general Opinion indeed is, that this *Urim* and *Thummim* were one and the same Thing: But (d) an ingenious Writer of our own Nation conceives them to be two different Oracles, and apply'd to different Purposes; that *Urim* was the Oracle, whereby God gave Answer to those, who consulted him in difficult Cases, and *Thummim*, that, whereby the High-Priest knew whether God did accept the Sacrifice or no; that therefore the former is call'd *Light*, as giving Knowledge, which dispels the *Darkness* of our Minds; and the other *Integrity*, or *Perfection*, because they, whose Sacrifices God accepted, were accounted *Thummim*, i. e. just, and righteous in his Sight: In short, that by the former, the *Jews* were ascertain'd of the Counsel or Will of God; by the latter, of his Favour and good Acceptance. But this Distinction has not met with a general Approbation, because, however, there may be (e) Passages where the one is mention'd without the other, yet in this Case, the one (which is generally the *Urim*) may well enough be suppos'd to include both.

THE *Jewish* Doctors are mostly of Opinion, that the *Urim* and *Thummim* were nothing else, but the precious Stones, which were set upon the Breast-plate; and that, (f) by the shining or protuberating of the Letters in the Names of the twelve Tribes, engraven upon the twelve Stones, the High-Priest, when he came to consult God, could read the Answer: But, in this Opinion, there are some Difficulties hardly to be surmounted. For, besides that all the Letters in the *Hebrew Alphabet* are not to be found on the *Pectoral*, since there are four, viz. *Heth*, *Teth*, *Zade*, and *Koph* manifestly wanting; (g) the Question is, by what Rules the High-Priest could make a Combination of

(a) P. Merfenne, in his Comment. on *Genesis*, and D. Geo. Merhof. de Scypho Vitreo, per certum humane Vocis Tonum fracto. (a) Strabo, lib. xiii. p. 898. (b) Zonare Annal. lib. ix. p. 409. (c) Edwards's Enquiry into difficult Texts, Part II. (d) Mede's Discourse 35. (e) Numb. xxvii. 21. 1 Sam. xxviii. 6. (f) Prideaux's Connection, Part II. lib. iii. (g) Calmet's Dictionary, under the Word *Urim*.

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of these Letters, (supposing there were enough of them) and so put them together, as to spell out the divine Oracle; because it is not pretended that these Letters mov'd out of their Places, but only swell'd or rais'd themselves above the rest? Suppose, for Instance, that any six of these Letters should have swell'd, or shone with a more than ordinary Lustre, yet, how should the High-Priest know to dispose of them in right Order, and which should be first, and which last? If it be said, By the Spirit of Prophecy: This vacates all the Necessity of the *Urim* and *Thummim*; because a prophetick Spirit would teach him what he desir'd to know, without any farther Assistance.

(b) *CHRISTOPHORUS à Castro*, and, from him, (i) *Dr Spencer* will needs have it, that this *Urim* and *Thummim* were two little Images, (much of the same Make with the *Gentile Teraphim*) which, being folded in the Doubling of the *Breast-Plate*, did from thence give *oracular* Answers by an audible Voice, and that this Device was taken from the *Egyptians*. But, besides that the Word *Teraphim* (to which these others were compar'd) is seldom or never taken in a good Sense, it seems a little improbable, that, in a Matter so solemn and sacred, the *Jews* should be left to follow the Examples of the idolatrous *Egyptians*. (k) The sacred Records indeed inform us, that the *Jews* borrow'd of the *Egyptians Jewels of Silver, and Gold, and Raiment*; but they no where intimate, that the *Jewish* High-Priest borrow'd his *pontifical*, and particularly his *oracular Habit*, from them: And therefore to think, that God, who declares himself so positively against the idolatrous Practice of the *Gentiles*, should, by these Images of *Pagan* Invention, take the ready Way to give them Countenance and Encouragement; or to think, that the *Jews*, who were expressly commanded not to *learn the Way of the Heathen*; and (l) *after the Doings of the Land of Egypt, where they*

had dwelt, not to do; were permitted, nay, commanded to make use of this *magical* and *superstitious* Rite, is such an Heap of odd and wild Conceits, as no unprejudic'd Mind can ever entertain.

OTHERS therefore are of Opinion, that it was the *Tetragrammaton*, or ineffable Name of God; and others, that it was no more than the two plain Words of *Urim* and *Thummim*, written or engraven on some Plate of Gold, or precious Stones, which, when plac'd upon the *Pectoral*, would give it an *oracular* Power: (m) But the most probable Opinion is, that it was no corporeal Thing at all, but only a certain Virtue (which God was pleas'd to give to the *Breast-Plate* at its Consecration) of obtaining an *oracular* Answer from him, whenever the High-Priest should put it on in order to ask Counsel of him, in the Manner that he had appointed; and that the Names of *Urim* and *Thummim* were given it, only to denote the *Clearness* and *Perspicuity*, which those Answers of God had, *viz.* that they were not like the *Heathen* Oracles, *enigmatical*, and *ambiguous*, but plain and manifest, and such, as never fell short of *Perfection*, either in the Fulness of the Answer, or the Certainty of the Truth of it.

WHETHER this Oracle was only consulted in the great and important Affairs of the State, or might be advis'd with in Questions of a lower Nature, is not entirely determin'd by the *Learned*; but the most prevailing Opinion is, that the *High-Priest* (who was the only officiating Minister in this Ceremony) was not allow'd to address it for any private Person, but only for the King, the President of the *Sanhedrim*, the General of the *Army*, or some other publick Governor in *Israel*; and that, not upon any private Affairs, but such only, as related to the publick Interest of the Nation, whether in *Church* or *State*.

WHEN therefore any such Matter happen'd, wherein it was necessary to consult God, the Custom was for the

From Josh. i.
to the End.

Upon what Oc-
casions consul-
ted.

The Manner of
doing it.

(b) De Vaticinio. (i) Dissert. de Urim & Thummim.
xviii. 3. (m) Pridcaux's Connexion, Part I. lib. iii.

(k) Edwards's Enquiry, Part II.

(l) Levit.

A. M.
2553, &c.
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High-Priest to put on his Robes and Breast-Plate, and so present himself, not within the Veil of the *Holy of Holies*, (for thither he never enter'd, but once a Year, on the great Day of *Expiation*) but without the Veil in the *holy Place*, and there standing, with his Face directly towards the Ark, or Mercy-Seat, whereon the divine Presence rested, he propounded the Matter; and, at some Distance behind him, but without the *holy-Place*, stood the Person, for whom the Oracle was consulted, in devout Expectation of the Answer, which (as (n) it seems most congruous to the Thing) was given him in an *audible Voice* from the *Mercy-Seat*, which was within behind the *Veil*.

HERE it was that *Moses* went to ask Counsel of God in all Cases; and from hence he was answer'd in an *audible Voice*: And, in like Manner, whenever the High-Priest presented himself before God, according to the Prescription of the divine Law, 'tis reasonable to believe, that God gave him an Answer in the same Way that he did *Moses*, i. e. by an audible Voice from the *Mercy-Seat*: And for this Reason it is, that such Address for Counsel is called *enquiring at the Mouth of God*, and the *Holy of Holies* (the Place where the Mercy-Seat stood, and from which the Answer was given) is so often in Scripture stiled (o) *the Oracle*, because from thence were the Oracles of God deliver'd to such, as came to ask *Counsel* of him.

* SUCH was the standing Oracle, which the *Israelites* might have had Recourse to upon all important Occasions; and if, in their League with the *Gibeonites*, they were too hasty and precipitate, their Unadvisedness is only to be blam'd, and not the Insufficiency of that Means, which God had appointed for their better Information. The short of the Matter is, the pretended foreign Ambassadors drew them in by a Wile and Artifice. The Story of their *old Shoes* and *mouldy Bread* was so well contriv'd, and seem'd so very plausible, that they took the Thing for granted, as we say. (p) *They took of their Victuals*, (as the Text expresses it) or receiv'd them, without any farther Enquiry, upon the Account of the Staleness of their Provision, and (q) *asked not Counsel of the Mouth of the Lord*; and therefore no Wonder, that God should suffer them to be outwitted, when they had an infallible Director so near at hand, and yet, in a Matter of such Moment, as that of entering into a *national Treaty*, never once bethought themselves to consult him.

From Josh. i. to the End.
Why the Israelites were outwitted, notwithstanding they had this Oracle.

BUT there was a greater Error in their Conduct with Relation to the *Gibeonites*. The Orders and Directions, which God gave them, when they enter'd into a State of War, were to this Effect. — (r) That to all Cities, which, upon their Summons surrender'd to them, they were to give Quarter; to save their Lives, but, at the same Time, to make them their

(n) *Prideaux's Connection*, Part. I. lib. iii. vi. 5, &c. 2 Chron. iii. 16. Chap. iv. 20, &c. Psal. xxviii. 2.

(o) Exod. xxv. 18, 20. Chap. xxxvii. 6. Lev. xvi. 2. 1 Kings

* The Jewish Doctors think, that the Custom of consulting God by *Urim* and *Thummim* continu'd no longer than under the *Tabernacle*: For it is a Maxim among them, that the Holy Spirit spake to the Children of *Israel* by *Urim* and *Thummim*, while the *Tabernacle* lasted; under the *first Temple*, i. e. the Temple of *Solomon*, by the Prophets; and under the *second Temple*, or after the Captivity of *Babylon*, by the *Bath-col*, or *Daughter of the Voice*, by which they mean, a Voice sent from Heaven, such as was heard at our Saviour's *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, Matth. iii. 17. Our learned *Spencer* seems to have adopted this Opinion, and endeavours to support it by these Arguments, viz. That the *Urim* and *Thummim* were a Consequence of the *Theocracy* of the *Hebrews*: For, while the Lord immediately govern'd his People, it was necessary that there should always be a Means at hand, whereby to consult him upon Affairs that concern'd the common Interest of the whole Nation; but since the *Theocracy* cens'd, when the Kingdom became *hereditary* in the Person and Family of *Solomon*, and the Interest of the Nation cens'd to be common, after the Division of *Israel* into two Monarchies, the Oracles of the *Urim* and *Thummim* must necessarily cease. And accordingly, if we consult the sacred History, we shall meet with no Footsteps of thus applying to God, from the Building of *Solomon's Temple*, to the Time of its Destruction; and after its Destruction, all are agreed, that this Oracle was never restor'd again. *Spencer de Urim & Thummim*, Cap. 2.

(p) Josh. ix. 14.

(q) Ibid.

(r) Deut. xx. 12, &c.

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their Slaves and Tributaries; but, that to such as slighted their Summons, and stood upon their Defence, they were not to use the same Treatment. If they were a *dis-
stant* Nation, or not belonging to the Country of *Canaan*, upon their taking any Place, they were to *put the Men only to the Sword*, sparing the Women and Children, and other living Creatures that were found in it; but, if they were a neighbouring or *Canaanitish* State, that stood out and resisted, *they were to destroy all without Exception, and save alive nothing that breath'd*. In the whole, however, there was this Injunction, that of what Country soever the People were, and whether they resisted, or resisted not, the *Israelites* were to make no (s) *Covenant with them, nor with their Gods*; and the Reason hereof is this — (t) That, as a League between two Nations implies, in the very Notion of it, their having upon some Terms given their Faith to each other, to observe punctually what had been stipulated between them; and, as when such publick Faith was given and taken, the Parties to the Treaty swore solemnly to each other by their respective Gods; the *Israelites*, who look'd upon the Gods of these Nations as *Vanity and Nothing*, who were oblig'd to (u) *overthrow their Altars, burn their Groves, hew down their Images*, and utterly extirpate their Religion, were totally debarr'd from entering into any Treaty or Alliance with them, because they could not recognize their Idols as Gods, nor take any publick Faith from the Worshipers of them. For so the People seem to say to the *Gibeonites*, at their first Coming into the Camp to propose a Treaty, *peradventure you dwell among us, " are some " of those neighbouring Nations, whom we " are order'd to destroy, whose Gods we " are to drive out, and whose Country we " are come to take Possession of," and how shall we make a League with you?* " The Interdiction we are under will not

" permit us; and therefore, if you pre-
" tend to impose upon us in this Matter,
" the Covenant of course is null and inva-
" lid; and so in Reality it was."

From Josh. i.
to the End.

'Tis reasonable however to imagine, that, after the Fraud of the *Gibeonites* was discover'd, the Princes of *Israel* might reflect upon their Neglect, in not consulting the Divine Oracle before; and, as the Peace, which they had enter'd into, was plainly repugnant to God's Command of exterminating all the *Canaanites*, the Question was, what they should do in this Case; whether abide by the Treaty, and so postpone the Command; or execute the Command, and so disannul the Treaty: The whole Stress of the Question turns upon this — (x) Whether God commanded the *Israelites* to destroy all the People of *Canaan* absolutely, and without Exception; or whether he allow'd them to spare such as voluntarily submitted themselves, and came to implore their Pity and Protection. The Words of the Injunction in this Case are full, and express enough; (y) *when thou goest nigh unto a City to fight against it, then proclaim Peace unto it, and if it make thee Answer of Peace, and open unto thee, then shall all the People that are found therein be Tributaries to thee, and shall serve thee. — Thus shalt thou do unto all the Cities, which are very far off from thee, and which are not of these Canaanitish Nations. But of the Cities of these People, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an Inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth, but shall utterly destroy them, that they teach thee not to do all their Abominations, which they have done to their Gods*. But here some great Writers have observ'd, that this utter *Extinction* of the *Canaanitish* Nations, considering the Reasons that are given for it, both here and (z) elsewhere, is to be look'd upon (a) as a Permission, rather than a positive Command, and should, at least, (b) be understood with this Limitation;

And why they
abode by their
Treaty with
the Gibeo-
nites.

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(s) Exod. xxiii. 32.
de Jure Gent. lib. iv. Cap. 2. Sect. 7. de Juramentis, &c.
33. and Deut. vii. 4.

(t) Shuckford's Connection, Vol. III. lib. xii.
(u) Puffendorf, ibid.

(v) Deut. xii. 3.

(y) Deut. xx. 10, &c.

(x) Puffendorf,

(z) Exod. xviii.

(b) Grotius, de Jure Belli, lib. ii. Cap. 13.

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tion; *unless they immediately submitted, renounced their Idolatry, and did every Thing that was enjoined them.* And to this Purpose (c) the *Jews* have a Tradition, that *Joshua* before he declar'd War against the seven Nations, wrote Letters to them, wherein he offer'd them three Conditions——That, if they were minded to depart, they should quit the Country immediately; if they were desirous to make Peace, they should come and treat with the *Israelites*; but, that if they intended to fight it out, they might betake themselves to their Arms: And they farther add, that the *first* of these Conditions the *Girgashites* embrac'd, and fled into *Egypt*; the *second* the *Gibeonites* accepted, and made a League with *Joshua*; and the *third* the confederate Kings made their Choice, when they took up Arms against the *Israelites*, and were all defeated.

BUT this is no more than a bare *Hypothesis*, invented on Purpose to solve the Difficulty, and seems not to have near so good a Foundation, as that, which supposes, that the Princes of *Israel*, remembering their former Omission, and their Insecurity in acting upon their own Bottom, might, in this Perplexity, have Recourse to God for Advice, and that his Answer might be, *that the League should be ratified.* Of this indeed we have no express Mention in Scripture; but in so short an History of such a Variety of Transactions, as that of *Joshua* is, we may well imagine, that several Circumstances may be omitted. For that some such Ratification of this Treaty was determin'd by God, we have great Presumption to believe (d) from the severe Punishment, which he afterwards inflicted upon the *Israelites*, and the Posterity of *Saul*, for his having slain some of the Descendants of these *Gibeonites*, (not improbably (e) at the sacking of the

Town of *Nob*). For, tho' this Action of *Saul's* was cruel and inhumane, because the Decree for the Extirpation of the *Canaanites* was now extinct; yet, what made it more heinous and provoking to God, was, the Infraction of the Treaty, which had subsisted about four Ages, and which cost the Lives of seven of that bloody Prince's Sons, and Grandsons to atone.

THE *Heathens*, it must be own'd, had no small Respect and Veneration for Oaths: Whenever they took one, it was in the most solemn and religious Manner. (f) They look'd upon the Gods as Inspectors, and Witnesses of what they said, more especially at such a Time as this. They believ'd that the *Furies* were appointed to be Avengers of all Perjury; and that, as (g) Disgrace attended it in this World, so Destruction would pursue it in the next. And, as this was the general Notion of most heathen Nations, so the *Gibeonites*, who had hitherto conceiv'd a good Opinion of the God of *Israel*, would have been strangely scandaliz'd, † had they found his People prevaricating with their Oaths, even tho' they were made upon a false Supposition. For Fear therefore, lest any Dishonour should fall ultimately upon that divine Majesty, whose Servants they were, the Princes of the Congregation unanimously agree, (and there seems to be something of a divine Inspiration in this their Unanimity) and declare it as their joint Opinion, (h) *We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel, and therefore, without breaking our Oath, or forfeiting his Favour, we may not touch them.*

IT was the same commendable Zeal for the Honour of God, that made the *Israelites*, on one Side of *Jordan*, conceive such angry Resentments against their Brethren

From Josh. i.
to the End.

Why the Israelites took Offence at their Brethren.

(c) *Saurin's Dissert. sur l'Artifice des Gabaonites*, Vol. III.
(f) *Vid. Hesiod. Dics*, Ver. 38, &c.
Lib. ii.

(d) 2 Sam. xxi. 1, &c.

(e) 1 Sam. xxii. 19.

(g) *Perjurii Poena Divina Exitium, Humana Dedecus.* Cic. de Leg.

† St *Ambrose*, treating of this Story, speaks of it in this Manner: ——— *Joshua did not think fit to break the Peace, which he had granted, because it was confirm'd with the awful Solemnity of an Oath, lest, nobly he was blaming the Perfidiousness of others, he himself should be worse than his Word, and forfeit his own Honour.* De Officiis, Lib. iii. Cap. 10.

(h) Josh. ix. 19.

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Brethren on the other, upon Suspicion, that they had *apostatiz'd* from his Worship into the Idolatry of the Nations, that were round about them. The two Tribes and an half, upon their Return from the Wars, erected an Altar, in Memory of their Relation to the Tribes and Tabernacle, which they had left behind them. (i). This Altar, it seems, was of an Height somewhat extraordinary; and, as it was the Custom for *Heathens* to worship their Gods (which were generally *celestial Bodies*) upon High-Places, as presuming that thereby they made nearer Approaches to them; their Brethren, on the *West Side* of the River, conjectur'd from thence, that this was an Altar rais'd for the Worship of the *Sun*, or some other *planetary* God. But, if even they were mistaken in that Conjecture, sufficient Reason they had to suspect, that it was intended for no good Purpose, since God had expressly forbidden them to offer their Sacrifices at any other Place, but the *Tabernacle*, or upon any other Altar, but that, which was built by his Appointment: For these are Directions which *Moses* gives them; (k) *Ye are not yet come to the Rest, and to the Inheritance, which the Lord your God giveth you: But, when ye shall be put in Possession of it, ye shall not do after all these Things, that we do here this Day, every Man whatsoever is right in his own Eyes; but in the Place which the Lord shall chuse, in one of thy Tribes, there shalt thou offer thy Burnt-Offerings; thither shalt thou come, and there shalt thou do all that I command thee.*

Now when they had sufficient Reason, as they thought, to suspect their Brethren of a Defection into Idolatry, what should they do? Why, herein they punctually follow the Rules, which God himself had prescrib'd them in such a Case. (l) *If thou shalt hear say, in one of thy Cities, which the Lord thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, Certain Men, the Children of Belial, are gone out from among you,*

and have withdrawn the Inhabitants of their City, saying, let us go, and serve other Gods, (which ye have not known) then shalt thou enquire, and make Search, and ask diligently, and behold, if it be Truth, and the Thing certain, that such Abomination is wrought among you, thou shalt surely smite the Inhabitants of that City with the Edge of the Sword; destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the Cattle thereof, with the Edge of the Sword; and thou shalt gather all the Spoil of it into the midst of the Street thereof, and shalt burn with Fire the City, and all the Spoil thereof every whit, for the Lord thy God; and it shall be an Heap for ever, it shall not be built again. And if the Israelites on the West of Jordan, having this Cause of Suspicion, pursu'd these Orders to a Tittle, who shall say, that they did amiss, or that their Zeal for God's Glory was rash and precipitate? They took the properest Method (which was sending an Embassy) for the Discovery of the Truth; and if, upon Enquiry, their Fears were found to be groundless, yet it seems to be an Error on the better Side; (as we commonly say) and an Instance of no contemptible Prudence, in Matters of so dangerous a Consequence, always to suspect the worst.

It may be doubted perhaps, whether the *Israelites* were a People of the greatest Bravery in the World, but it may truly be said, that there was no Necessity for their being so; because, upon all Occasions, they had the *Lord of Hosts* to protect them, and to fight their Battles for them. Supported by his Aid, (m) *how did one of them chase a Thousand, and two put ten Thousand to Flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?* But when this was the Case, no Wonder at all, that (n) *the Hearts of the People melted away, and became like Water.*

THE short of the Story was this:— They had all along hitherto been victorious; had subdu'd a Country beyond *Jordan*; pass'd that River, and conquer'd the Capital

(i) Saurin's Dissert. *Josue renvoie les Reub.*
(m) Chap. xxxii. 30.

(n) Josh. vii. 5.

(k) Deut. xii. 9, 8, 14.

(l) Deut. xiii. 12, 13, &c.

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tal of the adjacent Province by Miracle : And now, having sent out a Party to summons a small Place to surrender, upon the first Sally that the Inhabitants make, they are all on a sudden seiz'd with a *Panick*, forget their Courage, and flee; without so much as striking a Stroke. This they could not but perceive was the Effect of God's Displeasure, and therefore, considering themselves in an Enemy's Country, they had just reason to dread, that, if God should desert them in this Situation of their Affairs, *the People of the Land*, hearing the Report of their Defeat, would come, and (as *Joshua* expresses it) (o) *environ them round, and cut off their Name from the Earth.*

GOOD Reason therefore had the *Israelites* to be disconsolate, when they found that God, to whom they ow'd all their Valour and Victories, had forsaken them. But, in the mean Time, how did they behave upon this Occasion? Why, *they fell to the Earth upon their Knees*, in humble Supplication to God for Mercy; they continu'd all the Day long in fasting and praying, and express'd their Sorrow, and the Sense of their Unworthiness with the usual Tokens of Grief; and was not this better, than to become obdurate under God's afflicting Hand, as were the *Egyptians*? Nay, was not this the very Behaviour, by which the *Ninevites* mov'd the divine Mercy to reverse the Sentence of Excision, that had gone out against them? So that, all Things consider'd, the *Israelites*, in this Regard, are not to be blam'd; since they, who had lost the *Rock of their Might*, and had *the Terrors of the Lord set in Array against them*, were far from *fearing, where no Fear was.*

AND, in like Manner, if, to the Reasons, we have already alledg'd for their Conduct at *Jericho*, we add this one Consideration, *viz.* that they were just now entering upon their Conquests; that this

was the first City they had taken on the *West-Side of Jordan*; and that the People, they had to contend with, were to be terrify'd into Submission, rather than intreated; we cannot but be of this Opinion, that an Example or two of *high Severity*, at the first setting out, was no less than necessary to reduce the Country more speedily, and, with a less Effusion of Blood; as well as to verify the Promise of him, who appointed them; (p) *This Day will I begin to put the Dread of thee, and the Fear of thee upon the Nations, that are under the whole Heaven, who shall hear Report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in Anguish because of thee.*

WITHOUT entering therefore into any farther Vindication of the *Jewish Nation*, we may safely say, that, in the Cases we have had under Consideration, they were neither *zealous*, nor *timorous*, nor *cruel* without a Cause; that, in the *first* of these Cases, they express'd their Concern for God's Honour; in the *second*, their Dread of his departing from them; and in the *third*, their Obedience to his Command.

IT is a Law of God's own enacting, that (q) *the Fathers shall not be put to Death for the Children, neither shall the Children be put to Death for the Fathers, but every Man shall be put to Death for his own Sin*: But then we are to consider, that this Law was given to Man, and not to God, who has certainly a more absolute Right and Sovereignty over Men, than one Man has over another. That, as the *Israelites*, at this Time, liv'd under a *Theocracy*, and, in a proper Sense, had God, for their civil Governor, every wilful Transgression (such as *Achan's* was) must have been deem'd not only a Violation of the Divine Command, but a Crime of *lese Majesty* likewise; and that, in Crimes of this Kind, the Practice of all * Governments, *ancient*, as well as *modern*, has been, to make Children

From Josh. i.
to the End.

(o) Josh. vii. 9.

(p) Deut. ii. 25.

(q) Deut. xxiv. 16.

* Thus *Cicero*, to excuse the Confiscations, decreed against *Lepidus*, which affected his Children, the Nephews of *Brutus*, has these Words, ——— *Neque vero me fugit, quam sit acerbum, Parentum scelera Filiorum Pavis sui: Sed hoc Praeclare Legibus comparatum est, ut Charitas liberorum amiciores Parentes Reipublicae redderet. Ad Brutum Liber 1. Epist. 12.* And again, ——— *In quid videtur esse crudele, quod ad Liberos, qui nihil meruerunt, Poena pervenit; sed & id antiquum est, & omnium Civitatum. Ep. 15.* Warburton's Divine Legation, Vol. III. Lib. 5.

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dren suffer for the Iniquity of the Parent (as in Cases of *Attaint* of Blood, and *Confiscation* of Estate) and that, with the Reputation of the highest *Equity*. Upon the Supposition then that *Achan's* Family were not accessory to their Father's Crime, yet God, who gave them Life, had undoubtedly a full Power to take it away, at what Time, or in what Manner, he thought fit; and, if in Cases of *High-Treason* among Men, it is thought reasonable to devolve some Part of the Parents Penalty upon the Children, there is this farther Argument why *Achan's* Family should be made to suffer with him, because God could not express his Severity against Sin, nor take their Lives away, at a more convenient Opportunity, than in the Beginning of a *New Empire*, and when each Man's Right and Property was going to be settled; that such a dreadful Example of his Indignation against *Stealth* might deter others, if not for their own, at least for their *dear* Children's Sake, to abstain from such dangerous and pernicious Practices. (r) The *Jews* have a Maxim, *that he, who is an Accomplice in any Crime, is as culpable as the Person who commits it*; and therefore, if we suppose, that *Achan's* Family was privy to what their Father had done, and did conceal it, there could be no Injustice in including them in the Punishment. It may be pretended perhaps, that some of them were *Infants*, and so must be deem'd innocent; but the Text says nothing of this: It only calls them (s) *Sons* and *Daughters*, and, considering that *Achan*, in all Probability, was an old Man, (t) as being the *fifth* Descendant from *Judab*, it seems most likely, that his Children (u) were grown up, and so capable of knowing, and of either concealing, or discovering the Fact.

BUT, after all, there is no Occasion for our running ourselves into any Difficulty. The Text does not say, neither is it any ways imply'd, that *Achan's Sons and Daughters* were executed with him. In the Sen-

tence denounc'd against him, we find no Mention made of them, and why then should we suppose, that they were Partakers in his Punishment, any other ways, than as they were *brought out* to be *Spectators* of it? And a piercing Sight no doubt, it was, for Persons so nearly related to behold the sad Fate of their *Chief*, first ston'd to Death, and then, with all his Goods and Chattels, as well as those accurs'd Things, for which he was condemn'd, committed to the Flames. *His Oxen, and Asses, and Sheep* are here taken Notice of, to let us see, that *Achan* was a *wealthy* Man, and therefore inexcuseable in committing this Fact: And, tho' they were not capable of Sin, nor consequently, of Punishment properly so call'd; yet, as they were made for Man's Use, they might fairly die for his Instruction, *viz.* to convince him of the sad and contagious Nature of Sin, which even involves innocent Creatures in its Plagues; and *emblematically* to shew him, how much sorer Punishments are reserv'd for Man, who, having a Law given for the Conduct of his Life, and the Gifts of *Reason* and *Will* to restrain him from the Transgression of it, will adventure upon Things forbidden, and thereby contract greater Guilt, and draw upon himself severer Expressions of the Divine Wrath.

GOD indeed stiles himself *The Lord of The Stratagem* *against Ai,* *Joshua's own;* *Hosts*, and had so immediate an Hand in the Conduct of *Israel*, that every *military* Atchievement of theirs might very properly be ascrib'd to him: But when he order'd *Joshua* (x) *to go up against Ai, and to lay an Ambuscade behind it*, he might, notwithstanding this, leave the whole Glory of the Invention, and Execution of it to him, as an able and expert *General*; for, if he had always wrought Miracles in Favour of his People, and left nothing for *Joshua* to perform, we cannot see, how he could, have merited the Character of an extraordinary Man.

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IN

(r) *Saurin's* Dissert. sur le Crime, &c. de *Achan*. Annotations. (x) *Josh.* viii. 2.

(y) *Josh.* vii. 24.

(t) *Ibid.* Ver. 11

(u) *Psalm*

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IN other Events, where the *whole* may be said to be under the Guidance of God, he takes Care to direct every Particular of the Transaction. In passing the River *Jordan*, and surrounding the Walls of *Jericho*, he prescribes the Form and Order of the People's March, and how, upon every Occasion, they were to behave; but here, in the Affair of *Ai*, he contents himself with merely suggesting the *Means*, as Things that *Joshua* was no Stranger to, and leaves to him the Contrivance and Application of them. This Stratagem indeed is the first, that we find any Mention of in Scripture; but we must not from thence infer, that there was never any before put in Execution. The Art of War began very soon, and was carry'd on, no doubt, with great Application. The whole Excellence of its Management consists in circumventing, and doubling upon the Enemy with Dexterity; and therefore no Question, but that the Wits of Mankind were always employ'd in taking the Advantage of each other, and in gaining a Victory with the least Expence of Blood on their own Side. (y) The *Romans* fell frequently into the Snares, which were laid for them, because their *Generals* were Men of no *military* Skill; and therefore, to excuse their Ignorance, they alledg'd, that they made War, like *honest Men*, without Deceit or Artifice: And if *Alexander* disclaim'd the Use of Stratagems, it was, because he knew the Cowardise of his Enemies, and how easy a Matter it was to gain a Conquest in the fair and open Field. For, it is not to be doubted, but that had he been to attack any other Nation, except the effeminate *Persians*, he would have taken his Friend *Parmenio's* Advice, and (without blushing at a Victory obtain'd by good Management) fallen upon his Enemy under the Cover of the Night.

HOWEVER this be, that Stratagems are lawful in War we have good Presumption to think from God's directing *Joshua* to make Use of one; and tho' he does not

(as other Warriors do) employ any of *these* at a Pinch, or because he cannot accomplish his Designs without them; tho' he could, with one single Act of his Will, have destroy'd the City of *Ai*, and all the Inhabitants thereof, and, without suffering his People to strike one Blow, have put them in Possession of the promis'd Land; yet, chusing to act by *secondary* Means, he proceeded in the ordinary Way, and, leaving a good deal to *Joshua's* Skill and Management, assisted him only at some *critical* Conjunctions, that, by a Prolongation of the War, the Reputation of his People might be rais'd, and more frequent Opportunities occur, for the Display of his miraculous Works.

(z) *JOSEPHUS* indeed seems not to have consulted the Honour of *Joshua* much, when he ascribes the Delay of the Conquest of *Canaan* to the *Weakness* of his Army, and the *impregnable* Strength of the Places, he was to attack: But (a) some other *Jews* make the Matter much worse, when they tell us, that he desir'd to prolong the War, not only to retain the Office and Dignity of being *Captain-General*, but because he was inform'd by the Oracle, that, as soon as the Conquest was finish'd, he himself was to die. God however seems to have given us much better Reasons for this Retardation, when he acquaints *Moses* with his Intention: (b) *I will not drive the Canaanites out from before thee in one Year, lest the Land become desolate, and the Beasts of the Field multiply against thee*; and, when he complains of their sad Defection, after the Death of *Joshua*, (c) *I will not henceforth drive out any from before them, of the Nations, which Joshua left when he died, that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the Way of the Lord, to walk therein, as their Fathers did keep it, or no*: Whereupon the Historian tells us, that God accordingly *did leave these Nations, without driving them out*; and adds another Reason for their Continuance in the Country,

From Josh. i.
to the End.

Why God gave
not the Israe-
lites the Pos-
session of all
Canaan.

viz.

(y) *Calaneo's* Dictionary, under the Word *Ai*.
Oct. & Nov. Tell. Vol. II. p. 402.

(z) *Antiq. lib. v. c. 1.*
(b) *Exod. xxiii. 29, 30.*

(a) *Vid. Schotan. Biblioth.*
(c) *Judg. ii. 21, 22.*

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viz. that the *Israelites*, by having an Enemy to contend with, might be train'd up in the Art and Mystery of War: For (d) *these are the Nations*, says he, *which the Lord left to prove Israel, that by them they might teach those War, who before knew nothing of it.* So that here are three Reasons given us, why God delay'd the entire Subjection of *Canaan*; *viz.* because the Children of *Israel* were, as yet, too few in Number to replenish the whole Country; because God, by keeping the *Canaanites* in Being, was willing both to make Trial of his People's Obedience, and to train them, and their Posterity, for some Ages, up in military Discipline and Exercise.

BUT there is another Reason which *Joshua*, in his dying Speech, assigns for their not enlarging their Conquests to the utmost Bounds, which God had given them: (e) *Take good Heed therefore*, says he, *unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God; else, if you do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the Remnant of these Nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make Marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you; know for a Certainty, that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these Nations from before you.*

So that the Promise, which God made to the *Israelites*, was conditional; and, as they manifestly falsify'd their Part of the Obligation, by engaging first in Affinity, and then in Idolatry with the Nations, which they were bound to destroy; so God might very well think himself releas'd from his, and under no farther Concern for their Success, or the Enlargement of their Conquest; (f) but, as they had been the *Ministers* of his Vengeance, in punishing the Disorders of the *Canaanites*, they, in their Turn, were now made the *Instruments* of his chastizing the Disobedience of his own People: (g) *They shall be Snares and Traps to you, and Scourges in your Sides, and Thorns in your*

Eyes, until ye perish from the good Land, which the Lord your God hath given you. From Josh. i. to the End.

AND indeed, if we consider how violently, in After-Ages, the *Israelites* were oppress'd by their Enemies, and, by many Battles and Captivities, harass'd and diminish'd in their Numbers, we shall find no Necessity of enlarging their Possessions; because the Country, which they conquer'd, in the first six Years, was spacious enough to contain them. (h) The Promise however, which God made, was sufficiently accomplish'd in the Reigns of *David* and *Solomon*, when the Kingdom of *Israel* was in its *Zenith*; and tho' its Territories did not extend to the *Euphrates*, yet its *Dominion* did, since all that Tract of Land between *Jerusalem* and that great River was either *subdu'd*, or made *tributary* to them.

UPON the whole therefore it is evident, that the Author of the Book of *Joshua*, (be he who he will) in the three Instances, which we have been considering, has left no Imputation upon God; forasmuch as tho' he commanded *Achan* to be put to Death, yet it does not appear, that his Children suffer'd with him; or if they did, there is Presumption to believe that they were Accomplices in his Crime: Tho' he order'd the Taking of *Ai* by a *Stratagem*, yet the whole Form and Contrivance of it he left to the *General*; and tho' the *Israelites* did not actually possess all, that he had promis'd them, yet this was occasion'd by their own Disobedience and Cowardise, and the Falsification of those Conditions, upon which the full Conquest of the Land of *Canaan* was suspended.

THERE is but one Objection more, in the Course of this Period, which is usually alledg'd against the sacred History, and that is, the seeming Contradiction of the *Ark's* being said to be at *Shechem*, when it was, in Reality, at *Shiloh*: But, in Answer to this, some have imagin'd, that, as *Joshua* was now grown old and infirm, the

How the Ark may be said to have been, at this Time, at Shechem.

(d) Judg. iii. 1, 2.
xxiii. 13.

(e) Josh. xxiii. 11, &c.
(h) Pool's Annotations.

(f) Saurin's Dissert. Vol. III. Dissert. 10.

(g) Josh.

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the *Ark*, (i) upon this Occasion, was remov'd from *Shiloh*, the settled Place of the divine Residence, to *Shechem*, the Place of *Joshua's* Habitation, that he might, with greater Solemnity, and in the Presence of God, (whereof the *Ark* was the proper *Emblem*) deliver his *Charge* to the People. But other learned Men have observ'd, that, (k) by the *Sanctuary of the Lord*, we are to understand, not the *Ark of the Covenant*, but only some certain Place of religious Worship, such, very probably, as the *Jewish Oratories* were. That the holy *Ark* was not, on this Occasion, set up here at *Shechem*, is evident, they say, from that Prohibition given by God, (l) *Thou shalt not plant a Grove of any Trees, near unto the Altar of the Lord thy God, which thou shalt make thee, neither shalt thou set up a Pillar, which the Lord thy God hateth*: Whereas, in this

Sanctuary, we read both of an *Oak* planted, and a *Pillar*, or Statue, erected under it; which is certainly such a Violation of the divine Command, as *Joshua*, upon no Occasion, can be suppos'd capable of incurring. (m) 'Tis a very probable Opinion therefore, that the Place, where *Joshua* set up this *monumental Pillar*, was one of those, which the Tribe of *Ephraim* (to whom *Shechem* belong'd) had consecrated, and set apart for a *Proseucha*, or a Place to assemble in for publick Prayer; and that they made choice of this, rather than any other to perform their Devotions in, because it was that particular *Spot*, where God appear'd to *Abraham*, and promis'd his Posterity the Possession of the Land of *Canaan*.

* THAT there were such *Oratories*, or Places of publick Prayer, among the *Jews*, and that they were generally beset, or shaded

(i) Pool's Annot. and Patrick's Com. (k) Josh. xxiv. 26. (l) Deut. xvi. 21, 22. (m) Mede's Disc. 18.

* Epiphanius, who was a *Jew* bred, and born in *Palestine*, speaking of some Hereticks, (Lib. i. Hæres. 61.) whom he calls *Massilians*, and who, according to his Account, were neither *Jews*, *Christians*, nor *Samaritans*, but *Pagans*, tells us, that they, nevertheless, pretended to worship the one true God, and for that Purpose, had certain open Places, which they called *Proseuchæ*. And that the *Jews* (as also the *Samaritans*) had Places for religious Worship of the same Denomination, he proves from the Acts of the Apostles, (Chap. xvi. 13.) where Lydia is said to have met St Paul, and to have heard him preach in that Place, which, ἐδόνει τὸν πρὸς πρὸς εἶναι, seem'd to be a Place of Prayer. There is also at *Shechem*, (which is now called *Neapolis*) continues he, about a Mile without the City, a *Proseucha*, a Place of Prayer, like a Theatre, which was built in the open Air, and without a Roof, by the *Samaritans*, who affect'd to imitate the *Jews* in all Things. Juvenal, in his 3d Satire, describing the Manner, in which some wild young Fellows were wont, in their drunken Frolics, to affront and abuse every poor Man, they met in the Streets in the Night-Time, brings them in speaking thus: Ede, ubi consistas, in quâ te quæro Proseuchâ? Sat. III.

Whereby he either intimates, that he was some poor Wretch, who dwelt in an House, that could not keep out Wind and Weather, but, like the *Jewish Proseuchæ*, was all open above; or he alludes to the State of the *Jews* at that Time, who were banish'd out of *Rome* by *Domitian*, and had no Place of Shelter, but their *Oratories*, which were without the Walls of the City. For, that the *Jews* had their *Proseuchæ* about the City of *Rome* is evident from that Passage in *Philo*, (de Legatione ad Caium) wherein he commends the Clemency and Moderation of *Julius Cæsar*, who knew that the *Jews* had such Places of publick Worship, where they always assembled on the *Sabbath-Day*, and yet gave them no Molestation, as *Caius* had done. Josephus (in his Life, Sect. 54.) makes mention of a *Proseucha* at *Tiberias* in *Galilee*, and, in several Places in the *New Testament*, the same Term is made use of in the same Signification. Vid. Mede's Discourse 18. But then the Question is, whether it be not a Mistake in some learned Men, to apply an Usage, that is mention'd at such and such a Time, to a People who liv'd many Ages before.

Philo Judæus, (de Legat. ad Caium) speaking of the barbarous Outrage of some *Gentiles* against the *Jews*, dwelling then at *Alexandria*, acquaints us, that, of some of their *Proseuchæ*, they cut down the Trees, and others they demolish'd to the very Foundations. The Poet *Juvenal* alludes to the very same Custom of having Trees planted where the *Jewish Oratories* were, when, speaking of a Fortune-Teller of that Nation, he thus describes her:

Arcanum Judæa tremens mendicat in Aurem,
Interpres Legum Solymarum, magna Sacerdos
Arboris, & summi Fida Internuncia Cæli. Sat. VI.

And, in another Place, complaining, that through the Corruption of the Times, the once sacred Grove of *Capena*, which had formerly been the Habitation of the *Muses*, and the Place, where *Numa* was wont to meet the Goddess *Algeria*, was now let out to the beggarly *Jews* for a *Proseucha*, his Expressions are these:

Hic, ubi Nocturnæ Numa constituebat Amicæ,
Nunc, sacra Fontis Nemus, & Delubra locantur
Judeis; quorum Cophinus, Pœnumque Supellex.
Omnis enim Populo Mercedem pendere jussa est
Arbor, & ejectis mendicat Sylva Camænis. Sat. III.

For it is hard to conceive, what Affinity there should be between *Jews* and Trees, unless it be from the Custom, that their own *Oratories* were usually shaded with them.

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shaded with Trees, is evident from such a Variety of Testimonies, that it can hardly be contested; but, whether they were of so early a Date, as *Joshua's* Time, or not rather introduc'd after the Captivity of *Babylon*, is a Question not easy to determine. In the *main* however we may conclude, that, whether the *Ark of the Covenant* was occasionally brought to *Shechem*, or at *Shechem* there happen'd to be such an *Oratory*, as, in After-Ages, became frequent in *Judea*, there can be no Incongruity in the sacred *Penman's* saying, that the *Sanctuary of the Lord* (since either the *Ark*, or the *Oratory* might merit that Name) was at *Shechem*. There is another Solution however of this Difficulty, which ought not to be disregarded. † *Shechem* and *Shiloh* were about twelve Miles distant from each other, and, in the Mid-Way between them, was *Timnah-Serah*, the Place where *Joshua* liv'd. Since therefore the Text informs us, that (n) *he gathered all the Tribes of Israel to Shechem, and calls for their Elders, for their Heads, for their Judges, and for their Officers, and they presented themselves before God*; we may reasonably suppose, that tho' all the People met at *Shechem*, yet their *Elders* and chief *Officers* only presented themselves before God. That so great a Multitude could not meet together, and encamp in any Place, but where there is a proportionable Compass of Ground, is a Matter self-evident; and that, in the Confines of *Shechem*, there was a large and open Country, extending perhaps as far as *Shiloh*, and very commodious for their Reception, we have the Attestation of holy Writ. But then, since it is impossible for one Man to speak to such a Number of People and be heard, *Joshua*, very probably singled out the chief and principal of them, such as he foresaw would succeed him in the Government after his Demise, and these he took with him to *Shiloh*, a Place

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in the Neighbourhood, where was the *Ark*, or *Sanctuary of the Lord*, that he might there with the greater Solemnity, give them his final Charge, which they in their Turns, might deliver to their respective Tribes.

From Josh. i.
to the End.

THUS we have endeavour'd to satisfy the several *Objections*, which are usually made against some Passages in the *sacred History*, during the Government of *Joshua*: And if profane Testimonies would be of any Force, we might produce the Accounts, which their Historians give us of *Neptune's* drying up the River *Inachus*, and of *Agamemnon's* denouncing a Curse against any one, that should repair *Troy*, to justify the Narrative we have in Scripture of the miraculous Passage of *Jordan*, and the Resentment and Indignation, which *Joshua* conceiv'd against *Jericho*. The antient *Hercules* was certainly the same with *Joshua*. He is said to have wag'd War in Behalf of the Gods, against *Typhæus*, and the rest of the *Giants* of old, even as *Joshua* fought the Battles of the Lord against the Inhabitants of *Canaan*, Men of a vast Stature, and, at that Time, under the Displeasure of Heaven. In Conformity to the sacred Record of God's destroying the confederate Army of the *Amorites* with Hail-stones, the antient Heathens say, that *Hercules* was thus assisted in his War against the Sons of *Neptune*; and *Plutarch*, in his Life of *Timoleon*, tells us, that a terrible Storm of Hail, in the Face of the *Carthaginian* Army, gave him (tho' he had but very few Forces to encounter them) a compleat Victory over them. *The Sun's standing still* is no new Story: *Callimachus* (o) represents him, as stopping the Wheels of his Chariot to hear the Melody of a *Chorus* of *Nymphs*, wherewith he was so delighted, that it made him prolong the Day; and, tho' they are mistaken in the Cause, yet the antient Poets discover a Tradition of this miraculous

Most of these
Things confirm'd by
Heathen Testimony.

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† *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. III. Lib. xii.

(n) Josh. xxiv. 1.

(o) His Words are these:

Οὐδὲ ὑπὸς ἐνεῖνον
Ἦλθε πᾶρ Ἥελιου καλὸν χρόνον ἀλλὰ δεῖται
Δίφρον ἐπισήσας τὰ δὲ φάσα μὴκύνονται.

Callimachus in *Dianam*.

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miraculous Event, * when they describe the Heaven's blushing, and the Sun's standing still, at the Sight of the *unnatural* Murther which *Atreus* committed. For if *Statius* mistake not, this bloody Fact happen'd in the Time of the *Theban* War, which, according to the best *Chronologists*, was much about the Time of *Joshua's* Conquest of *Canaan*. But even supposing *Statius*, or any other Author from whom he took the Hint, are mistaken in their *Chronology*, * the Time of *Phaëton's* Life

(whose Story of misguiding the Chariot of the Sun, is suppos'd to take its Rise from hence) will synchronize with the Year of the Sun's standing still in the Days of *Joshua*. So that, as to the most wonderful Transactions, which, in this Space of Time, we meet with in holy Writ, *God has not left himself without a Witness*; forasmuch as the heathen Writers (tho' with some Variation or Disguise, according to the Humour of their *Mythologists*) are known to relate the same Things.

From Josh. i.
to the End.

D I S S E R T A T I O N I.

Of the Shower of Stones, and the Sun's standing still.

The former of
these Miracles.

OF all the miraculous Things, that happen'd in *Joshua's* Wars with the People of *Canaan*, the *Shower* of Stones, which God sent upon his Enemies, while they fled, and the *Stop*, which he put to the Course of the Sun, that he might have a longer Space to destroy them in their Flight, are the most remarkable, and do therefore deserve a more particular Consideration.

THE former of these Events the sacred History represents in this Manner — (p) *And it came to pass, that as they* (viz. the Army of the *Amorites*) *fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, the Lord cast down great Stones from Heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died. They were more, which died of the Hail-Stones, than they, which the Children of Israel slew with the Sword.* But the Difference among *Commentators* is, whether we are to understand this Miracle of a Shower of Stones, properly so call'd, or of a Shower of Hail.

THE learned *Calmet*, in a *Dissertation* prefix'd to his *Commentary* upon *Joshua*, has taken a great deal of Pains to shew, that the Stones, which *the Lord* is said to have cast upon the *Amorites*, were not ordinary Hail-Stones, (since it would be incongruous, as he thinks, to interest God in so common an Occurrence) but *real solid Stones*, which he supposes might have been engender'd in the Air by a Whirlwind carrying up Sand or Gravel into a Cloud, and there mixing it with some such *oily* or *nitro-sulphureous* Matter, as might consolidate, and form it into a combustible Body; that so, when, by frequent Agitation, it came to be fir'd, it might burst through the Cloud, and, scattering itself upon the *Explosion*, might fall down upon the Earth in the Nature of a perfect Shower of Stones.

THAT great Quantities of Stones have, in this Manner, been discharg'd from the Clouds, is evident from several Histories. *Diodorus Siculus* (q) informs us, that, as the

* *Tardius lumentis Noctem deiecit Olympo
Jupiter, & Versum miti, reor, Æthera curâ
Sustinuit, dum Fata vetant; nec longius unquam
Cessavere novæ, perfectæ sole, Tenebræ.*

Statius Theb. lib. i. & v.

* The Sun stood still in the Days of *Joshua*, A. M. 2554, when *Phaëton* was about Twenty-four Years old, an Age, of Ambition enough to desire, tho' not of Ability to execute, the difficult Province, which he undertook. *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. III. Lib. xii.

(p) Josh. x. 11.

(q) Vol. II. lib. xi.

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the *Persian* Army was on their March to plunder the Temple at *Delphos*, Thunder and Lightning, and a violent Storm of Stones fell in their Camp, and destroy'd a great Number of Men. (r) In the Reign of *Tullus Hostilius*, when News was brought to the Government, that it had rain'd Stones upon Mount *Alba*, those who were sent to enquire into the Matter, brought Word, not only that the Fact was true, but that these Stones had fallen from the Skies with an Impetuosity equal to the most violent Storm of Hail. (s) Not long after the Battle at *Cannæ*, the same Author assures us, that a Storm of the same Kind fell on the same Mountain, which lasted for two whole Days; and Events of this Nature, attested by the best Authors, have been so frequent at *Rome*, at *Capua*, at *Livinium*, and several other Places in *Italy*, that a Man must be destitute of all Modesty, who pretends to deny them absolutely.

NAY, not only great Quantities of smaller Stones, but sometimes Stones of a prodigious Size have been known to fall from the Clouds, whereof this learned Author, (t) among many others, gives us several Instances, both of antient and modern Date. But then it is justly to be question'd, whether these Authors have not suffer'd themselves to be impos'd on by the too confident Narrations of others. We may suppose indeed, that *Whirlwinds*, or *Hurricanes* may raise the Sand or Gravel, and carry it on high, or some sudden Irruptions of subterraneous Fire may discharge great Quantities of Cinders, or Ashes into the Air, where, meeting with some Exhalations of a sulphureous, oily, or nitro-line Quality, they may, by the Pressure of the Clouds, be condens'd, and harden'd into a stony Substance; yet, how any Cloud should be able to support such a Quantity of smaller Stones, much more of vast massy ones, as would be necessary to destroy the Army of the five confederate

Kings, and to continue falling down upon them from *Bethhoron* to *Azekab*, Places which lay in different Tribes, and can hardly be suppos'd less than twelve or fourteen Miles distant (to say nothing of the many Apertures in the Earth, which must have been seen afterwards in these Parts, upon Supposition that the Thing was effected by *Vulcanos*) is a Matter not altogether so credible.

THE Truth is, there is no Reason for carrying this Miracle so high; since a Shower of *Hail-Stones* will not only do the Work every whit as well, but seems to be the genuine Import of *Joshua's* Words; who, having acquainted us, that the Lord cast down great Stones upon the *Amorites*, adds, by Way of Explication, that they were more, that died by the *Hail-Stones*, than by the *Sword*; where it is reasonable to suppose, that had there been great Stones, as well as Hail, the Death of the greater Number of those that perish'd, would not have been attributed to the *Hail* only.

IT is some Confirmation of this Exposition, that we find the *Septuagint*, in both Places of the Text, translating it *Λιθες Χαλάζης*, which *Josephus* (u) calls a violent Tempest of *Hail-Stones* of a prodigious Size; and the Author of (x) *Ecclesiasticus* thus recounts the whole Matter; with *Hail-Stones* of a mighty Power, he made the Battle to fall violently upon the Nations, and, in the Descent of *Bethhoron*, he destroy'd them that resisted.

THE Prophet *Ezekiel*, in his Predictions against *Gog*, introduces God, as threatening, that (y) he would plead against him with *Pestilence*, and with *Blood*, with an overflowing Rain, and great *Hail-Stones*, *Fire*, and *Brimstone*: And, in another Place, speaking of false Prophets, who seduc'd his People into an Opinion of their Security, as if they had been foris'd within a Wall, he pursues the Metaphor, and tells those who daubed it with untemper'd Mortar, (z) that it should fall; for

From Josh. i. to the End.

But Hail-Stones only.

(r) Liv. lib. i. Dec. 1.
na a large Account hereof.
(z) Ezek. xiii. 11.

(s) Ibid. lib. 25, 30, 34.
(u) Antiq. lib. v. c. 1.

(t) See *Saurin's* Dissert. likewise, who has given
(x) Chap. xvi. 6. (y) Chap. xxxviii. 22.

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for there shall be an overflowing Shower, says he, and ye, O great Hail-Stones, shall fall, and a stormy Wind shall rent it. So that from these, and several other Passages of the like Nature, we may learn, that, in executing his Judgments upon the Face of the Earth, Hail-Stones are very frequently Arrows in the Hands of the Almighty: And of what Force they are to do Execution, we are advertiz'd in what befel the Egyptians, when (as the sacred History has related it) (a) the Lord sent Thunder and Hail, and the Fire ran upon the Ground: And the Lord rained Hail upon the Land of Egypt; so there was Hail, and Fire mingled with Hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the Land of Egypt, since it became a Nation. And the Hail smote, throughout all the Land of Egypt, all that was in the Field, both Man and Beast: It smote every Herb of the Field, and brake every Tree of the Field. Nor are there Examples of a later Date wanting (especially in our Philosophical Transactions) of the vast Havock and Destruction, that Hail-Stones (from (b) one to five Pounds Weight) have done in several Places; killing both Man and Beast, and laying the whole Country waste, for some sixty, or seventy Miles round. And therefore, since it is agreed on all Hands, that Hail-Stones have frequently fallen, large enough to destroy never so great a Number of People, when naked and defenceless against their Blows, what need is there for our having Recourse to any other Solution?

A Shower of Hail indeed, may be suppos'd to proceed from a more natural Cause: But, when the Event happen'd at the very Instant, wherein God promis'd to assist his People against their Enemies; when, though it might have annoy'd either Army, it fell only on that, which God had before determin'd to ruin; and fell so very heavily upon it, as to destroy more than the Sword of the Conquerors had done; such an Event as this, I say, cannot

but be look'd upon as a miraculous Interposition of Providence, how fortuitous soever the Concourse of second Causes may be. In working of Miracles, God usually employs natural Causes and Productions. He does not create any new Thing for the Purpose; but makes use of what is already created, in a new and extraordinary Manner: And therefore, tho' the Shower of Hail, and probably the Wind too, which made it fall with such Impetuosity, were both of them natural; yet the sending them at the very Nick of Time, and directing them to fall upon the Enemy only, in this there was manifestly the Hand of God, and something supernatural.

THE other Miracle is thus related in Holy Writ. (c) Joshua said, in the Sight of all Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon, in the Valley of Ajalon: And the Sun stood still, and the Moon stayed, until the People had avenged themselves of their Enemies. Is not this written in the Book of Jasher? So the Sun stood still in the midst of Heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole Day: And there was no Day like that, before or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the Voice of a Man; for the Lord fought for Israel. Now for the better understanding of these Words, we must observe.

I. THAT nothing is more common in Scripture, than to express Things, not according to the strict Rules of Philosophy, but according to their Appearances, and the vulgar Apprehension concerning them. The Sun and Moon, for Instance, are call'd (d) two great Lights; but, however that Title may agree with the Sun, 'tis plain, that the Moon is but a small Body, the least that has yet been discover'd in the Planetary System, and that it has no Light at all, but what it borrows, and reflects from the Rays of the Sun; and yet, because it is plac'd near us, it appears to us larger than other heavenly Luminaries, and from that Appearance, the holy Scriptures give it such an Appellation. And, in

From Josh. i. to the End.

The latter Miracle, of what Kind.

The Manner of Joshua's expressing himself, justify'd.

(a) Exod. ix. 23, &c.
(d) Gen. i. 16.

(b) Saurin's Dissert. sur la D  faite des cinq Rois.

(c) Josh. x. 12, &c.

A. M. 2553, &c.
Ant. Christ. 1451, &c.

in like Manner, because the Sun seems to us to move, and the Earth to be at Rest, the Scriptures speak a great deal of the *Pillars, and Bases, and Foundations* of the Earth, and of the Sun's (e) *rejoicing, like a Giant, to run its Race*, and of (f) *his arising, and going down, and hastening to the Place, where it arose, &c.* Whereas it is certain, that, (g) if the Sun were made to revolve about the Earth, the * general Law of Nature would thereby be violated; the Harmony and Proportion of the heavenly Bodies destroy'd; and no small Confusion and Disorder brought into the Frame of the Universe: But, on the contrary, if the Earth, turning upon its own *Axis* every Day, be made to go round the Sun in the Space of a Year, it will then perform its Circulation, according to the same *Law*, which the other Planets observe; and (without the least Exception) there will be a most beautiful Order and Harmony of Motions, every where preserv'd thro' the whole Frame of Nature. As therefore the Scriptures were design'd to teach us the Art of *holy Living*, and not to instruct us in the Rudiments of *natural Knowledge*, it can be deem'd no Diminution either to their Perfection, or divine Authority, that they generally speak according to the common Appearance of Things, and not according to their Reality, or *philosophic Truth*. The plain Matter of Fact is, that in the early Ages, both before, and long after the Days of *Joshua*, the most learned *Astronomers* had no Notion of the Improvements, which our *modern Professors* have since attain'd to. They never once dream'd of the Earth's *Rotation*

upon its own *Axis*; but, according to common Appearance, were fully perswaded, that the Sun and Moon had their respective Courses. Upon this Supposition they form'd their *Schemes*, and thought themselves able to answer every Phenomenon by them. And therefore, if God had prompted *Joshua* to desire the Prolongation of the Day, in a Manner more agreeable to our new *Astronomy*, or to record the Miracle in Terms more suitable to it; this would have been a plain Contrariety to all the Rules of Science then in Use. The People, who heard him utter the Words, *Earth rest upon thy Axis*, would have thought him distracted, and those who read his Account of what had happen'd, if related in suitable Expressions, would have decry'd it as false in Fact, or pass'd it by with Contempt and Disregard, as a wild Fancy or Blunder of his own.

From Josh. i. to the End.

2. IN Relation to the Places, over which the two heavenly Bodies were to stand, the Sun over *Gibeon*, and the Moon over the *Valley of Ajalon*, we must observe, that (even upon the Supposition of the Sun's Motion) the *Jewish General* cannot be thought to speak in a proper and *philosophick* Sense. For, since the Sun is almost a Million of Times bigger than the Earth, and some Millions of Miles distant from it, to justify the strict Sense of the Words, a Line, drawn from the *Center* of the Sun to that of the Earth, must exactly pass by *Gibeon*, which we know it cannot do, because no Part of the *Holy-Land* lies within the *Tropicks*: And therefore we must conclude, that *Joshua* here speaks according to the outward *Appearance* of

In relation to the Places where, and Time, when this Miracle was wrought.

7 U

Things,

(e) Psal. xix. 5.

(f) Ecclef. i. 5.

(g) *Keil's Astronomical Lectures.*

* Besides this general Argument of Mr *Keil's*, Mr *Whiston* has one, which he accounts no less than a *Demonstration*. "If the Earth, says he, have an *annual* Revolution about the Sun, it must affect the apparent Motion of all the other Planets, and Comets; and, notwithstanding the Regularity of their several Motions in their own *Orbits*, must render the regular Motions, as to us living upon the moving Earth, sometimes *direct*, and that swiftly or slowly; sometimes *stationary*, and sometimes *retrograde*, and that swiftly or slowly also; and all this, at such certain Periods, in such certain Places, for such certain Durations, and according to such certain Circumstances, (as *Geometry* and *Arithmetick* will certainly determine) and not otherwise. Now, that this is the real Case in Fact, and that every one of these Particulars are true in the *Astronomical* World, all, that are skillful in that Science do freely confess, even those, who do not think fit to declare openly for this *annual* Revolution of the Earth, which yet is the *natural* and certain Consequence of that Concession." *Whiston's Astron. Princ. of Relig.* The Reader, that is desirous to know more both of the *Annual* and *Diurnal* Motion of the Earth, may consult Mr *Derham's* Prelim. Disc. to his *Astro. Theol.*

A. M. 2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.

Things, which makes the Sense of his Words plain and intelligible.

WHEREVER we are, (if so be we are not hinder'd by Objects immediately surrounding us) we can cast our Eye upon Part of the *Surface* of the Earth; and, at the same Time, take into our Prospect some small *Extent* of the *Firmament* of Heaven; which seems, as it were, to cover the other; and each *celestial* Body, which we perceive in this Extent above, appears to us to be directly over such and such Part of the Earth, as we *alternately* turn our Eyes to: And 'twas thus, that the *Sun*, when *Joshua* spake, seem'd to him, and to those that were with him, to be over *Gibeon*, and the *Moon* to be over the *Valley of Ajalon*. This Valley, in all Likelihood, took its Name from some adjacent Town; but then, as there are three *Ajalons* mention'd in Scripture, one (*b*) in the Tribe of *Ephraim*; another in (*i*) *Zebulon*, and another in (*k*) *Dan*, it is reasonable to think, that the Place here spoken of, was in *Dan* the most remote Province from *Gibeon*; for we must suppose, that these two Places were at some considerable Distance; otherwise *Joshua* could not see the Sun and Moon both appear at the same Time, as it is probable they were both in his Eye, when he utter'd these Words.

3. IN Relation to the Time when this Miracle began, and how long it lasted, the Scripture's Expression is, that the *Sun stood still in the midst of Heaven*, and *hasted not to go down about a whole Day*: Which Words can import no less, than that the Sun stood still in the *Meridian*, or much about Noon, and that in this Position it continu'd for the Space of a *civil* or *artificial* Day, *i. e.* for twelve Hours. But (*l*) *Maimonides* is of Opinion, (and in this he is follow'd (*m*) by some Christian Writers) that there was no such Cessation of the Sun and Moon's Motion, but that the whole Purport of the Miracle

was this: — “ That God, at *Joshua's* Request; granted him and his Soldiers such a Degree of Spirits, Activity, and Dispatch, as enabled them to gain a compleat Victory, and do as much Execution in one Day, as might otherwise have taken up two:” But this is a Construction so repugnant to the genuine Sense of the Words, as to need no formal Confutation.

THERE is something more, however, to be said to the Notion of other learned Men, who, with Regard to the Time, when *Joshua* might send up his Request, and the Miracle begin, think it more probable, that he should pray for a longer Day, when he perceiv'd the Sun just going to leave him, than when it was in its Height. But *Joshua*, no doubt, had Reasons for what he did: He was an old experienc'd *General*, eager for a compleat Victory, and able to compute what Time it would take to atchieve it; so that his Fear of losing any Part of the present Advantage, might make him pray that the Day might be thus prolong'd, until he had obtain'd the *whole*. If the Sun, in its Declension, had stopp'd its Course, it might have answer'd his Purpose perhaps; but then it had given a juster Handle to the Suggestions of those, who would deny the whole Merit of the Miracle. For, if the Retardation of the Sun had not happen'd until it was going to set, (*n*) *Spinoza* might, with a much better Grace, have attributed the extraordinary Length of this Day to the *Refraction* of its Rays from the Clouds, which at that Time were loaded with Hail; or (*o*) *Peirerius*, to some *Aurora Borealis*, or *Parelium*, which, after the Setting of the Sun, might appear about the Territories of *Gibeon*, and so be mistaken for the Sun's standing still: But now, by fixing it in its *meridian* Point, all these Cavils are effectually silenc'd; and (*p*) God, no doubt, who heard him so readily, inspir'd the *Hebrew General*

From Josh. i.
to the End.

(b) 1 Chron. vi. 69.
Chap. 39.
lib. iv. c. 6.

(i) Judg. xii. 12.
(m) *Grotius* and *Mosses* in *Locum*.
(p) *Calant's* Dissert. sur le Commandment, &c.

(k) Josh. xix. 42.

(n) *Tract. Theolog. Politic.* c. 2.

(l) *Mora Nevoch.* Part II.
(o) *Præadam.*

A. M. 2553, &c.
Ant. Christ. 1451, &c.
General with that Wish or Prayer, which otherwise perhaps would never have come into his Head.

The Book of Jasher, what.

4. IN Relation to the Book of *Jasher*, (or of *just and upright Men*) which *Joshua* quotes, as a Voucher of the Truth of this Miracle, the Opinions of learned Men are much divided. (q) Some think, that it was the Book of *Genesis*, which is here so called, because it treats of the Lives of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, three of the most righteous Men, that the World then knew. The Targum of *Jonathan* calls it *the Book of the Law*, as containing, not only the chief *Precepts*, which God gave his People, but several *Promises* likewise of the Wonders, which he intended to work for them. (r) *Josephus*, and some Interpreters after him, will have it to be certain *Annals* of the Lives, and particular Adventures of some *Jewish Worthies*, and of other Things remarkable, that happen'd to that Nation; tho' others again suppose, that this was only a *Collection* of some *Verses*, which the *Israelites* thought themselves concern'd to learn by Heart, the better to remember the Miracles which God had been pleas'd to vouchsafe them. But whatever the Subject of this Book was, or † whether it was compos'd in *Prose* or *Verse*, 'tis a groundless Conjecture to say, (s) that it was wrote in a figurative and hyperbolical Style, or that the *Quotation*, which *Joshua* takes from it,

is so to be understood. The Design of the Quotation is only to confirm what *Joshua* had said concerning the Retardation of the Sun; and therefore, if the Book of *Joshua* affirms, that the Sun did stand still, that of *Jasher* (in what Style so ever it was written) must necessarily be suppos'd to do the same; otherwise it would have been to no Purpose to have cited it.

It cannot be deny'd indeed, but that, upon some Occasions, the sacred *Pennmen* do use Figures, and *poetical Expressions*; but then the Sense and Chain of the Discourse do easily discover it, when they do so. Whenever they intend to express themselves in a figurative Manner, there is usually something going before, which prepares the Reader for it; and besides that *figurative Expressions* cannot be long continu'd, there is always something apparently in them, that can by no means be reduc'd to a *literal* Sense. But now, in the Scripture Account of this Transaction, where do we perceive any Thing like this? (t) *Joshua*, seeing the Enemy put to the Rout, begs of God to give him a compleat Victory, and, at the same Time, out of the Zeal and Fervour of his Mind, commands the Sun and Moon not to advance any farther until he had effected his Desire. The sacred Historian tells us, that, at his Command, these heavenly *Luminaries* actually did stand

From Josh. i. to the End.

And the whole Narrative of this Miracle literal.

(q) *J. Jarib.* in Josh. x. 13.

(r) *Antiq. lib. x. c. 17.*

† M. Le Clerc has taken the Pains to verify the two Places, where Mention is made of the *Sun's standing still*, by the Transposition of some Words, in order to make it appear at least probable, that the Author of the Book of *Joshua*, in quoting them out of that of *Jasher*, had only reduc'd them to *historical Prose* by the contrary Transposition. But, besides the Difficulty of telling us, what Kind of Verses these are, (since the Art of *scanning Hebrew Poesy* has been lost as long as *St Jerom's* Days) if he supposes them to be only Rhymes and Cadences, it is no uncommon Thing, we know, to meet with several Passages, both in the *Scriptural*, and other *Prose Writers*, which, with a small Variation of the Text, are capable of this harmonious Turn, and yet, were originally never so intended. It is to be observ'd however, that tho' the Words, *so the Sun stood still in the midst of Heaven, and hasten'd not to go down about a whole Day*, are probably cited from some ancient Record, yet the preceding ones, *and the Sun stood still, and the Moon stayed, until the People had avenged themselves upon their Enemies*, (Josh. x. 13.) are the Author's own, wherein he talks, not in the Loftiness of a *Poet*, but in the Plainness and Simplicity of an *Historian*: And therefore it is, at least, a bold Assumption, to say, that a Writer, who barely appeals to another for the Truth of a single Instance, has taken the whole from him. The most that can be fairly concluded from such an Appeal, is, that the Fact is equally affirm'd by both, either in the same or equivalent Terms; whereas, had the Terms of the *Sun's standing still in the midst of Heaven* been intended to mean no more, than that there remain'd so much Light, after its Setting, occasion'd by some unusual *Refraction*, as made the whole Army think it was still above the *Horizon*, no honest Man (for Fear of imposing on his Reader) would have cited them, without modifying their Sense, or giving them an Explanation. *Saurin's Dissert. sur la Defaite des cinq Roys*; and *Univ. lib. i. c. 7.*

(s) *Grotius* and *Le Clerc* in Locum.

(t) *Calmer's Dissert. sur le Commandement, &c.*

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2553, &c.
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1451, &c.

stand still; and, to evince the Credibility of a Thing so marvellous, having produc'd the Testimony of another Author, that makes mention of the same Event, he thereupon concludes, that (u) *there was no Day like that, before it or after it, that God hearkened to the Voice of a Man.* Here, we see, are all the Tokens imaginable of a simple, literal, and historical Narration: And the Reader must therefore be strangely prejudic'd against the Belief of all Miracles whatever, who can possibly distort such plain and uniform Expressions into any figurative or metaphorical Sense, in order to evade the Force of this.

An Objection. "BUT, if there really was such a Miracle wrought, 'tis somewhat strange, that the Author to the *Hebrews*, when he certainly makes mention of Things of less Moment, should entirely forget this, or that we should have no Memorial of it recorded by any *profane* Writer. God is not so prodigal of his Miracles, one would think, as to reverse the whole Order of Nature, and stop the Sun in its regular Course, merely that a Victory might be obtain'd in one Day, which, every whit as well, might have been gain'd in two; tho' it cannot be deny'd, but that, if it was so, his *hearkening to the Voice of Joshua*, gave him a Pre-eminence far above *Moses*, (forasmuch as all his Miracles were nothing in Comparison of this) even tho' the Scriptures say expressly; that (x) *there rose not a Prophet, in all Israel, like unto Moses, in all Signs and Wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the Land of Egypt, and in the Wilderness.*"

Answer'd, by showing the Reasons why St Paul omitted it.

THE Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, in (y) the Chapter now under Debate, meant no more, than to give his Reader some notable Instances of the wonderful Power of Faith. To have been too curious in the Choice of these Instances, especially when he wrote to Persons of

the same Nation, and who were as well acquainted with these Things as himself, would have savour'd too much of Art and *human* Wisdom; which *inspir'd* Authors always professedly avoid; and to have been too prolix in the Commemoration of them, would have spoil'd the Form of his *Epistle*, by swelling that Part of it beyond its due Proportion.

THE Apostle himself seems to be sensible of this; and therefore we find him cutting himself short, omitting some, and reckoning up several other Instances in the Gross; and (z) *what shall I more say? for the Time would fail me, to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Sampson, and of Jephtha; of David also, and Samuel, and all the Prophets.* You see, that, in the Catalogue of his *Worthies*, he observes no great Method in enumerating them, nor does he so much as mention *Joshua*, tho' his Character be vastly superior to that of *Gideon*, and others, that he takes Notice of; and therefore, if his omitting this Particular of the *Sun's standing still* may be deem'd a sufficient Argument against its *Reality*; by Parity of Reason, all the other miraculous Transactions, which he has thought proper not to mention, such as the Plagues of *Egypt*, the Wonders in the Wilderness, the Passage of *Jordan*, and several others of the like Nature, must be reputed destitute of Truth, how frequently soever they may be recorded in other Parts of Holy Writ.

AND in like Manner, tho' we find no Mention made of this wonderful Event in *Heathen* Writers, yet this is no valid Objection against it, because it happen'd many Ages before there was any *Historians* or *Chronologers*, that we know of, extant to record it. Or if we think, that a Fact, so very remarkable, could have hardly escap'd a *general Observation*, why may we not suppose, that the publick *Archives*, or Monuments, wherein it was recorded, in the long and obscure Time that interven'd before any of our present

From Joshi. i.
to the End.

Why Heathen
Authors.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Anc. Christ.
1451, &c.

Historians arose, have been lost; and that nothing has been transmitted to us, (except what we have in *Sacred Writ*) but an uncertain *Tradition*, clouded with Fable, and poetical Fictions?

It can hardly be thought indeed, but that the Humour, which the *Poets* had, * of imputing to *Magick* the Power of stopping the Stars in their Courses, and what they relate of their *Heroes* and *Demi-Gods* being able to lengthen Days or Nights, as it best serv'd their *military* or *amorous* Purposes, proceeded from something: And to what can we ascribe it more properly, than to a glimmering Knowledge, which they might from Tradition have of this miraculous Event? But however this be, 'tis certain, that the Argument, drawn from the Silence of *heathen* Authors, can be of no Validity against the Truth of this Miracle, since it did not happen in any Age, when the earliest of them liv'd, and might therefore be what they knew nothing of; since all their Works have not descended to us, and in what is lost, they perhaps might have related it, as in what is extant, we are sure they say nothing to contradict it.

(a) It must be reckon'd a Point of *Justice* then, and a Kind of *Right* belonging to all Nations, to be determin'd, in what concerns the History of any Country, by the History of those People, who are presum'd to be better acquainted with their own Affairs, than any Strangers can: And therefore we cannot, without apparent Prejudice, deny this Privilege to the *Hebrew* Writers, even tho' we found some *heathen* Testimonies not entirely according with them. But when nothing of this is pretended; on the contrary, when (as far as these dark Times would permit) there is a Concurrence and Harmony between them, there can be no Shadow of Reason for calling in Question their Veracity, unless the Things which they relate be

either *impossible* or *contradictory*, which, in the Case before us, can never be affirm'd; because it is sure and self-evident, that the Author of Nature, who gave Being and Motion to the Sun and Stars, may stop that Motion, and make them stand still, when, and as long as he pleases; especially when their Rest will contribute to his Glory (as it certainly did in this Instance) as much as their continu'd Motion does.

GOD indeed never works any Miracle but upon a just and proper Occasion; but then, we ought to remember, that this Battle, against the *confederate* Kings, was fought not *offensively*, but *defensively* on the Side of *Israel*, in order to save a People, whom they had solemnly taken under their Protection. The *Gibeonites*, as is generally suppos'd, were a *Commonwealth*, for which Reason they might not enter into a League with the five Kings; and, as a *free* People, they had a Right, no doubt, to take all proper Measures for their Safety. *Joshua* therefore could not but look upon the Confederacy form'd against them, as cruel and unjust, and himself oblig'd in Honour not to refuse the Oppress'd the Succours, they requested of him, upon any Pretence whatever; since God's Honour was likewise concern'd in the Preservation of a People, who had enter'd into an Alliance with his own *Inheritance*, and had their Alliance ratify'd by the Mouth of his *High-Priest*, and with the Sanction of his most blessed Name. Upon these Considerations, *Joshua* loses no Time, but marches all the Night to their Assistance; and, on the next Day, God is pleas'd to reward his Faithfulness and Zeal with a most miraculous Victory, whereby he not only rescu'd his Allies, but made all the Land of *Canaan* sensible likewise, that a greater and more powerful God was on *Israel's* Side, than any whom they worshipp'd, (b) by stopping the Sun

From Josh. i. to the End.

Reasons for God's working this Miracle.

7 X

and

* Cessavere Vices Rerum, dilataque longa
Hæsit Noctæ Dies: Legi non paruit Æther,
Torpuit & Præceps, audito Carmine, Mundus.

Lucan's Pharf. lib. vi.

(a) Calmet's Dissert. sur le Commandment, &c.

(b) Patrick's Comm. in Locum.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.

and Moon (which were two of the principal Deities, whom those Idolatrous People ador'd) in the Midst of their Course.

GOD might, no doubt, in the Compass of two Days, have enabled the *Israelites* to have gain'd a compleat Conquest over their Enemies, without the *Expence of a Miracle* (as these Men call it). But then, had this been obtain'd by the Dint of the Sword only, it would have been imputed to their superior Valour and Strength, and deem'd no more, than the common Fate of War; or had there nothing more remarkable happen'd in it, than a Shower of large Hail-Stones, this might have been thought owing to Chance or natural Causes, or at most, been only known in that Neighbourhood: Whereas, the stopping of the two great *Luminaries*, in the Height of their *Career*, (which could not but be universally seen and felt) was enough to convince these poor deluded People, that the Gods, whom they trusted in, were subject to the God of *Israel*, and, at the same Time, deter the *Israelites* from falling into the like Idolatry, from (c) *kissing their Hand* (as *Job* expresses that Form of Worship) *when they beheld the Sun as it shined, or the Moon walking in its Brightness*: To convince them I say, that (d) *the Gods of the Heathens were but Idols*, and that *it is the Lord who made, and who ruleth in the Heavens*.

Joshua, notwithstanding this Miracle, not superior to Moses.

IT cannot be question'd, but that the Fame of this Miracle rais'd *Joshua's* Reputation to an high Degree, nor (e) can we see any Inconvenience in admitting, that this was a more remarkable Miracle, than any, which *Moses* ever did; because it does not therefore follow, that *Joshua*, in other Respects, was a Person of greater Eminence, than *Moses*. Our blessed Saviour tells his *Disciples*, (f) *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the Works, that I do, shall he do also, and greater Works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father*: And yet he gives us

to understand, in another Place, that (g) *the Disciple is not above his Master, nor the Servant above his Lord*. From Josh. i. to the End.

ELISHA was the Servant and Attendant on the Prophet *Elijah*, and yet it is certain, that, according to our Estimate, he did more and greater Miracles, than his Master did; for even (h) *after his Death his Body prophesied*; (as the Son of *Sirach* expresses it) *he did Wonders in his Life, and at his Death were his Works marvellous*. And therefore we need not account it a strange Thing, that we find *Joshua* here doing a Miracle, which, in our Opinion, surpasses all that ever *Moses* did: Because God's making use of the Ministry of one Man, rather than another, in his surpassing Works of Wonder, is no certain Proof of the Man's superior Merit; since, in this, as well as any other Dispensation, he is at perfect Liberty (i) *to chuse (if he pleases) the weak Things of the World, to confound the Things that are mighty; yea, and base Things, and Things that are not, to bring to nought Things that are, that no Flesh should glory in his Presence*.

BUT after all, we talk of *greater and less* Miracles, when, in Reality, there are no such Degrees of Comparison between them. For what is it that makes us account one Work of this Kind greater than another? If it be, because we conceive more Difficulty in the Doing it; this, with Regard to God (the sole Author of all Miracles) is a great Mistake, forasmuch as all Things are equally easy to his Almighty Power. The Motion, and other Properties of every created Being, were at first impress'd by him; (k) *He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast*; and, with the same Facility, he can retard, or suspend their Operations, for they have no Power of resisting the very first Beck of his Will. Since every Thing therefore, that is contrary to the ordinary Course of Nature, requires the

(c) Job xxxi. 26.
xiv. 12.
xxxiii. 9.

(d) Psal. xvi. 5.
(e) Matth. x. 24.

(f) *Catme's* Dissert. sur le Commandment, &c.
(h) Ecclus. xlviii. 13, 14.

(i) 1 Cor. i. 27, &c.

(j) John
(k) Psal.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.

the Interposition of an Almighty Power, and whatever is not impossible in itself, is equally possible to God; with him there can be no Difference between passing the *Jordan*, and passing the *Red-Sea*, between

drawing Water out of the *Stony Rock*, and arresting the Sun in the Firmament of Heaven; for (1) *whatever he pleased, that did he, in Heaven, and in the Earth, in the Sea, and in all deep Places.*

From Josh. i. to the End.

(1) Psal. cxxxv. 6.



CHAP. II.

From the Death of JOSHUA to the Death of SAMPSON.

The HISTORY.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.

After the Death of Joshua, several Tribes conquer several Parts of Canaan.

AFTER the Death of Joshua, * no particular Person, that we read of, succeeded him in the Government; and therefore the most probable Opinion is, that every Tribe was govern'd by their respective *Heads*, or *Elders*, (which Form of Government subsisted about *thirty Years*) and that, in their Wars with the *Canaanites*, they made them their Commanders. For, several of the *Canaanitish* Kings remaining still unconquer'd, the *Israelites* unanimously resolv'd to set about their Reduction; and accordingly repair'd to the *Oracle* at *Shiloh*, to ask Directions of God, which Tribe should begin the War. God's Orders were, that the Tribe of *Judah* should begin; and therefore they, taking

to their Assistance the Tribe of *Simeon*, first set upon the cruel † King of *Bezek*; sack'd the Town, kill'd ten Thousand of its Inhabitants, and, as he was endeavouring to make his Escape, seiz'd him, and cut† off his *Thumbs* and *Great-Toes*, in the like Manner, as he had done to no less than *seventy* little Kings or Princes, whom he compell'd to gather their Meat, like Dogs, under his Table: So that the Similitude of his Punishment made the Tyrant reflect upon his own Cruelty, and acknowledge the Justice of God in what he had brought upon him.

From Judges i. to the End of Ruth.

AFTER the Conquest of *Bezek*, the two united Tribes † invested *Jerusalem*, and, having taken it, put the Inhabitants to

* The *Samaritan Chronicle* tells us indeed, that, in the last Assembly which Joshua held, he nominated twelve *Chiefs*, of every Tribe one, and put it to the *Lot*, who should succeed him in the Government; that the Lot fell upon his Nephew *Abel*, whom he accordingly crown'd, and invested with other Ensigns of Honour, &c. But this is thought to be no more than a *fabulous* Account invented to fill up this void Space of Time. *Saurin's Dissert. sur Heglon, Roi des Moabites tué, &c.*

† There is another Place in Scripture, *viz.* 1 Sam. xi. 8. where *Bezek* is mention'd; and since *Eusebius* and *Jerom* tell us, that there were, in their Days, two Towns, about seventeen Miles from *Shechem*, of the same Name, and not far distant from each other, we see nothing of Moment to hinder them from being both but one City in former Times. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. II.*

† The Reason of their mutilating him in this Manner, was, to make him incapable of War any more, being unable to *handle Arms*, by Reason of the Loss of his *Thumbs*, or to *run swiftly*, (which was a notable Quality in a Warrior in those Days) by the Loss of his *Great-Toes*. *Patrick's Comm. in Locum.*

† We do not read, that *Jerusalem* was ever taken by Joshua, tho' it seems highly probable, that, when he took the King of *Jerusalem*, he did to it, as he did to the rest of the Cities belonging to those Kings, *Josh. x. 3, 23*. But when he was gone to conquer other Parts of the Country, it is likely that the old Inhabitants return'd again, and took Possession

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.

to the Sword, and set the Place on Fire. They thence march'd to *Hebron*; and, having made themselves Masters of it, went to attack *Debir*, which was Part of *Caleb's* Allotment, though the *Canaanites* at that Time had Possession of it. *Caleb*, † who, in all Probability, was *General* in these Wars, being resolv'd to storm the Place, made Proclamation in the Camp, that whoever should attack, and carry it, should have his Daughter *Achsah* as a Reward of his Valour; which his gallant Nephew *Othniel*, Son to his younger Brother *Kenaz*, achiev'd, and so, not only obtain'd the beautiful Damsel for his Wife, but with her a large Estate likewise in a well-water'd Country, which, at her Request, her Father very generously bestow'd on him.

Thus the Tribe of *Simeon* assisted that of *Judah*, to subdue the mountainous Parts about *Jerusalem*, and the southern Parts adjoining to the Wilderness of *Paran*; and, when this was done, the Tribe of *Judah*, in like Manner, assisted the *Simeonites* to take *Gaza*, *Askelon*, and *Zephah*, which was then call'd *Hormah*; so that these Places, in After-Ages, came into their Possession. Encourag'd by these Successes, the Family of *Joseph* undertook the Conquest of *Bethel*; and, to this Purpose, sent out Spies, to take a Survey of the Town, and to gain what Intelligence they

could. They perceiving a Man coming out of it, immediately seiz'd him, but promis'd to spare his Life, upon Condition that he would give them the best Information he could, in what Way the Town was approachable. The Man did so; and by his Information they succeeded so well, that, sending for their Forces, they enter'd the Place, and put all the Inhabitants to the Sword, except the Man who had given them Intelligence, and his Family.

THE other Tribes had equally good Success in gaining the Possession of the Lands that were allotted them; only the Tribe of *Dan* was compell'd to quit the Plains for fear of the *Amorites*, and to retire into the mountainous Parts of the Country, where they were pent up for some Time, until the Family of *Joseph* came to their Assistance; and, having restrain'd the Insolence of their Enemies, reduc'd them to a narrower Tract of Land, than what they had at first.

ONE great Default however in those, that were successful against the *Canaanites*, was, that they did not make a right Use of their Victories, but, either through a misplac'd Lenity, or Covetousness, instead of destroying them, (as they were commanded) suffer'd them to live promiscuously among them, and contented themselves with making them *tributary*; which so far incens'd God, that he sent an † Angel

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of Ruth.

They keep Company with the Natives, fall into Idolatry, and are oppress'd.

Possession of it, for the Land was not then divided among the *Israelites*. But as *Joshua*, a little before his Death, divided the Land, and this City fell, in Part, to the Share of the Tribe of *Judah*, they dispossessed the *Jebusites*, that dwelt there, of all but the strong Fortrefs on the Top of Mount *Sion*, which held out till the Days of *David*. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Who was their *General* on this Occasion, is not expressly mention'd either in Scripture, *Josephus*, or any other ancient Historian; and yet, it is hardly to be question'd, but that *Caleb* was the Person. He was of the Tribe of *Judah*, older than any other by twenty Years; and yet, like *Moses*, he continu'd in his full Strength and Vigour. He and *Joshua* were the only two Spies, who, having search'd out the Land, gave a true Report of it; and therefore, as *Joshua* was the first *General*, he had the greatest Right to succeed him, and this might be the Reason why *Joshua*, at his Death, nam'd no other. He, and *Joshua* were the two only Persons, to whom the *Israelites* gave Inheritances for their signal Services; and, as his Inheritance lay unconquer'd in this Tribe, he had the greatest Reason to be active in reducing it. His Name alone is mention'd in all these Wars; and as his Son-in-law, *Othniel*, was the first Deliverer of the *Israelites* from their Oppressions, he seems to have succeeded *Caleb* in this Dignity, as his nearest and most valiant Relation. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. v. c. 3.

† The *Jeaus* are generally of Opinion, that, by this Angel, we are to understand a *Prophet*, who was sent by God as a *Messenger*, which the Word very often imports; and this Messenger they commonly take to have been *Phineas*, who was employ'd upon this Errand. We can see no Reason however for their departing from the usual Signification of the Word, especially when there is no Absurdity in it, and the Sense of the Context seems to require our retaining it. Nay, there is Reason to say, that the Person, who here reproves the *Israelites*, was something more than a created Angel; for who but God can speak in this Stile, *I made you to go out of Egypt*? No Prophet, nor any created Angel durst have been so bold: And therefore, the Opinion of most *Christian* Interpreters is, that it was the Son of God, who

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Angel from *Gilgal*, to expostulate the Matter with them; to remind them of the Favours, which he had vouchsaf'd them, in delivering them out of *Egypt*, and bringing them into that happy Land, of his punctual Performance of all the Promises he had made them, and of their vile Ingratitude in rejecting his Precepts, for which he had very justly withdrawn his Protection from them.

THIS Reproof made the People, for the present, a little sensible of their Transgression, so that they fell into a general *Lamentation*; and, deploring the Wretchedness of their Condition, offer'd Sacrifices to God, in order to appease his Wrath. But no sooner was this Fit of Humiliation over, but, continuing still their Correspondence with the *Canaanites*, indulging themselves in their loose Conversation, and making Intermarriages with them, they fell into Idolatry, and worshipp'd *Baal* and *Ash-teroth*, and other Idols of the Heathens, which so provok'd the Lord, that he left them to themselves; and they (without his Protection) made so weak a Defence, that they were often taken, and enslav'd by their Enemies.

THE first Oppressor, that the *Israelites* had, was nam'd *Chusan-Prishathaim*. He was King of *Mesopotamia*, and, when he invaded the Territories of *Israel*, he

made an easy Conquest, and impos'd a *Tribute* on them, which lasted for eight Years; but, at the Expiration of that Time, God rais'd up *Othniel*, *Caleb's* Son-in-Law (who was the first of those whom the Scripture calls *Judges*) and inspir'd him with Courage and Resolution to take up Arms against the King of *Mesopotamia*, whom he soon defeated, and settled the *Israelites* in a State of Peace and Tranquillity, which lasted for forty Years. But during this Space of Time, the People fell into a general Apostacy, and Corruption of Manners, whereof the † two following Stories are sad and remarkable Instances.

THE Tribe of *Dan* (as we said before) being pent up in the mountainous Parts, found their Territories much too narrow for them; and therefore they sent out of their Body five Spies to survey the Country, and bring them in Intelligence, in what Part of the Regions round about they might most likely extend their Bounds. The Spies, in their Journey, came to the House of *Micah* of Mount *Ephraim*, whose Mother, thinking it too much Trouble to go to *Shiloh* to worship, and offer Sacrifices there, had made an *Idol*, and plac'd it in a private Chapel of her Son's building: For her Son had an † *Ephod*, and *Teraphim*, and, for some Time, had con-

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i. to the End
of Ruth.

The sad Im-
piety and
Wickedness of
these Times,
shown in two
Instances.

7 Y

separated

who is frequently in Scripture call'd the *Angel of the Covenant*. And fit it was for him to appear now, as coming from *Gilgal*, to put them in mind of his illustrious Appearance near that Place once before, of the Assurance he then gave them of his Presence with them in the Conquest of the Land, and of the solemn *Covenant*, he made with them, by renewing of *Circumcision*. The *Angel's coming up from Gilgal* is therefore mention'd, as a very pertinent Circumstance, to upbraid the *Israelites* with their base Ingratitude to God, and with their Sloth in not endeavouring to expel the *Canaanites*. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† These two Stories are related in the xvii, xviii, and xixth Chapters of *Judges*, and being so plac'd, they may seem to belong to the latter Part of this Period; whereas, in the Judgment of most learned Men, they were transacted much about this Time. 'Tis plain from the Text, (Chap. xvii. 6.) that these Things happen'd *when there was no King* (i. e. no *Ruler*, for, properly speaking, there had hitherto been no King) in *Israel*, but every Man did what was right in his own Eyes; and the Reason why *Samuel*, or whoever was the Author of this Book, places them here, is, because he was not willing to break the Thread of his History by intermixing these Matters with it, but reserv'd them to be related apart by themselves. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† That the Divine Service might be perform'd with a greater Resemblance of what was done at the Tabernacle in *Shiloh*, he made *priestly Ornaments*; for so some learned Men take the *Ephod* to comprehend, not only the Breast-plate adjoining to it, but all the rest of the Vestments us'd by the High-Priest. His Intention was to set up an Oracle in his own House, in Imitation of the Sanctuary of *Moses*; and therefore, to make the Conformity the greater, 'tis suppos'd that he erected a Kind of *Ark*, whereon he plac'd his two *Teraphims*, to answer the two *Cherubims* in the Tabernacle, as he caus'd the Priest who officiated for him to wear an *Ephod*, in the Manner that the High-Priest did, when he consulted God. Mr *Selden* (in his *Syntagma 1. de Diis Syris*, Cap. 2.) well observes, that the Worship of the true God, and of Idols, was here blended together. The *Ephod* and the *Lewite*, which *Micah* afterwards provided, were intended, no doubt, for the Service of the true God, but the graven Image and *Teraphim*, by which the

Children

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secrated one of his own Sons to be his Priests; until a *Levite*, who had dwelt some Time at *Bethlehem-Judah*, travelling from thence to seek a better Settlement, happen'd to call at *Micah's* House, and by him was hir'd to execute that Office; whereupon, the Man was fond enough to believe, that God would prosper him not a little, now that he had got a *Levite* to be his Priest.

The Idolatry of
the Danites.

IT so happen'd, that some of these Spies being acquainted with this *Levite*, and, after some Discourse, understanding in what Capacity he serv'd *Micah*, desir'd of him to ask Counsel of God, what Success they might possibly promise themselves in the Enterprize they were going upon, and, with the Encouragement which he gave them, they proceeded on their Search, until they came to *Laiſh*; where, observing a pleasant and fruitful Country, and the People living in a secure and negligent Manner, without any Rule or Discipline among them, they return'd to their Brethren, and gave them an Account, how fruitful the Country was, and how easily, in their Opinion, the Place might be taken by Surprise.

UPON this, the *Danites* drew out a Party of six hundred Men, and sent them to take Possession of the City *Laiſh*: But, in their Way through Mount *Ephraim*, they call'd at *Micah's* House, and, in his

Absence, seiz'd the *Levite*, the *Ephod*, the *Teraphim*, and other Images, that *Micah* had made; and, as the *Levite* was remonstrating against what they had done, they soon pacify'd him, by representing the Advantage of being a Priest to a whole *Tribe* rather than any one Family; and, with the Hopes of that, he went very willingly along with them.

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MICAH returning Home, and understanding that his Priest and his Gods were gone, musters up his Friends, and pursues the *Danites*; but, when he came up with some of the hindmost of them, and was making his Complaint against the Injury they had done, they wish'd him to be gone; for that, if he persisted to irritate the rest of the Party, it would certainly cost him and his Friends their Lives: And so continuing their March, on the third Day they came to *Laiſh*, where finding it unguarded they burnt the City, destroy'd the Inhabitants, and took Possession of the Country; but, in a short Time after, they rebuilt the City, which, after the Name of their Father was call'd *Dan*, and here setting up the Images, which they had stolen from *Micah*, they made this same *Levite* (whose Name was *Jonathan*) their Priest: And in this State of idolatrous Worship they continu'd for about three hundred Years, even unto the Time † that the Ark of God was taken Captive by the

Children of *Dan* desir'd the *Levite* to enquire of God, belong'd unto *Dæmons*. They neither trusted to the *Ephod* alone, which related to God, nor to their *Teraphim* alone, which was their own Invention, but thought it necessary to join both together in divine Worship: And thus began Idolatry in *Israel* by the Superstition of an old Woman, who put this in her Son's Head. This Woman many of the *Jeaus* suppose to be the same with *Dalilah*, who, having got so much Money of every one of the Lords of the *Philistines*, thought it expedient to employ some of it in expressing her Devotion. But this is an idle Conceit, that has no other Foundation, than *Dalilah's* being mention'd in the foregoing Chapter; whereas *Micah* was some hundred Years prior to her. *Patrick's* Commentary, and *Jurien's* Hist. des Dogmes & Cult. Par. III.

† The Words of the Text are: ——— And the Children of *Dan* set up the graven Image, and Jonathan and his Sons were Priests to the Tribe of *Dan*, until the Day of the Captivity of the Land, Judg. xviii. 30. But then the Question is, what we are to understand by the Captivity of the Land? Now there are two Times mention'd in Scripture, when the Children of *Israel* were carry'd away Captive by *Tiglath-Pileſer*, when he took *Hazor*, and *Gilead*, and *Galilee*, all the Land of *Naphtali*, and carried them into *Assyria*, 2 Kings xv. 29. And 2dly, by *Salmannasser*, who carried *Israel* away, and placed them in *Halah*, and in *Habor*, by the River *Gozan*, and in the Cities of the *Medes*, 2 Kings xviii. 11. And to one of these, the Words of the Text are suppos'd by some learned Men to refer; but then it must necessarily follow, that this Book was written in later Times, even after the former of these Captivities at least. It can hardly be suppos'd however, that these Images should be suffer'd to continue in the Days of *David*, who was a Man after God's own Heart, and study'd to advance true Religion to the utmost of his Power all the Country over, from *Dan* to *Berſheba*; and therefore others, with good Reason, conclude, that by the Captivity of the Land is meant the taking of the Ark by the *Philistines*, and carrying it Captive into the Temple of *Dagon*; for to the *Phalmit* expressly

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1443, &c.
And the War
of the Benja-
mites.

the *Philistines*, which was in the Days of *Samuel*.

NOT long after this, the War of the *Benjamites* broke out, which is another tragical Piece of History, and as pregnant a Proof of the People's *Immorality*, as the other is of their *Apostacy*. The Substance of the Story is this.—* A *Levite* of Mount *Ephraim*, having taken a Wife out of *Bethlehem-Judah*, who prov'd a lewd Woman, she made an Elopement from her Husband to her Father's House, where she continu'd for some Months. The *Levite* however, being willing to be reconcil'd to her, went to bring her home; but, in his Return, happening to be benighted, he was oblig'd to turn * into *Gibeab*, where an old Man of Mount *Ephraim*, who only was an *Inmate* there, after some Conversation, receiv'd him into his Lodgings. But, while they were at Supper, the Men of the City beset the House, and demanded to have the Stranger brought out to them, that, according to the Sin of *Sodom*, they might know him. 'Twas in vain to use Intreaties to so rude a Rabble. The good old Man offer'd them his own Daughter, who was a Virgin; and, at length by Consent the *Levite's* Wife was turn'd out among them. They abus'd her all that Night; and, the next Morning, she was found dead at the Threshold, which enrag'd her Husband to such a Degree, that, taking her home with him, he cut her dead Body into twelve *Parts*, and sent one to every Tribe, with an Account of the *inhospitable* Treat-

ment, he met with at *Gibeab*; that so, in a general Assembly of *Israel*, it might be resolv'd, what Method of Revenge it was proper to take upon this dismal Occasion.

THE Assembly agreed, that never so inhumane an Act had been known in *Israel*, since the Time they left *Egypt*; and thereupon came to a Resolution, to bring the Offenders to condign Punishment, and, in order to that, sent Messengers to them, demanding the Men, that had committed this Outrage; but they refus'd to deliver them, and, in order to defend the Criminals, muster'd up all their Forces. The Army of the *Benjamites* consisted but of six and twenty Thousand, whereas that of all *Israel* amounted to four hundred Thousand Men; and yet, in two several Engagements, the *Benjamites* had the better of them; for in the *former*, they kill'd them twenty two Thousand, and in the *latter*, eighteen Thousand Men. But the Misconduct of the *Israelites* upon this Occasion was, that, being too confident of the Goodness of their Cause, and the Superiority of their Numbers, when they went to consult God, they only enquir'd of him which of the Tribes should lead the *Van*, without placing their Confidence in him, or depending upon his Assistance for Success, which these repeated Defeats brought to their Remembrance; and therefore, before the third Engagement, they humbled themselves in a proper Manner before God, and, from his Encouragement, attacked the *Benjamites* once more. But, to make their

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precisely calls that unlucky Event: *He forsook the Tabernacle in Shiloh, even the Tent that he had pitched among them; he delivered their Power into Captivity, and their Beauty into the Enemies Hands*, Psal. lxxviii. 60, 61. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

* *Josephus* relates this Story with a good deal of Variation from the sacred History: ——— That the *Levite's* Wife was not a lewd Woman, but one, who did not well agree with her Husband, for which Reason she left him, and went to her Father; that the young Men of *Gibeab*, seeing her to be a very beautiful Woman, took Notice of the House, where she went in, and came and demanded her, and not the *Levite* himself, as the Scripture has it; that the *Levite* did not turn her out, but that the young Men took her by Force, and carry'd her to their own Quarters, where they spent the whole Night in all Manner of *bestial* Liberties, and then sent her back again next Morning; that, upon her Return, she fell into such a Confusion of Thought, for what had befallen her that Night, that (what between Shame and Indignation) she sunk down upon the Ground, and expir'd; that the *Israelites*, met in Convention, sent to the *Benjamites* to deliver up the *Malefactors*, who had committed this brutal Violence upon the *Levite's* Wife, which they refus'd to do, as thinking it dishonourable for Fear of a War to submit to Rules of other People's prescribing, &c. *Josephus*, Lib. v. c. 2.

* *Gibeab* lay North of *Jerusalem*, about twenty or thirty Furlongs from it, and was built upon an Hill, as its Name imports. *Wells's* Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. III.

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their Victory the more secure, they laid an Ambuscade behind the City, which, while they pretended to fly, enter'd it, and set it on Fire; whereupon the main Body of the *Israelitish* Army fac'd about, and charg'd so furiously upon the *Benjamites*, that they slew five and twenty Thousand of them, set Fire to their City, and destroy'd all that belong'd to them. It so happen'd however, that six hundred of them (which were all that remain'd of the Tribe) made their Escape into the Wilderness, and shelter'd themselves in the Fortrefs of *Rimmon*.

The Manner of
recruiting their
slaughter'd
Tribe.

WHEN the Heat of the Action was over, and the *Israelites* began to reflect coolly on what they had done, they were griev'd not a little; and that the rather, because, at the Beginning of this War, they had all taken a rash Oath, not to marry their Daughters to any of the *Benjamites*: So that how to recruit the Tribe they could not tell, until they bethought themselves of these two *Expedients*. When the War first broke out, they had bound themselves by Oath, to put all to the Sword, who would not join them in the common Cause against the *Benjamites*; and finding by their *Muste-Roll*, that the People of *Jabesh-Gilead* had neglected to come, they dispatch'd twelve Thousand Men, with Orders to put Man, Woman, and Child to the Sword, except such Virgins as were marriageable, whom they intended to give to the *Benjamites* for Wives. For, by this Time, the *Benjamites* were reconcil'd to the rest of the People, had left their *Strong-hold*, and were come into the Camp; so that, when the Men return'd from the Slaughter of the *Gileadites*, they

brought four hundred Virgins along with them, which were immediately given to the *Benjamites*; but as the *Benjamites* were six hundred in Number, there was not for every Man one, and therefore they betook themselves to another Expedient.

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of Ruth.

ONCE every Year, † there was a Festival kept at *Shiloh*, whither the young Women of the Country us'd constantly to come and dance. The *Israelites* therefore suggested to the *Benjamites*, that, as many as wanted Wives, might at this Time repair to the Place, and, concealing themselves in the Vineyards, seize upon the young Women, as they came out dancing, and carry them off to their own Habitations. The *Benjamites* accordingly pursu'd their Instructions; and, watching their Opportunity, took every one his Damsel away with him: So that, having by this Means got themselves Wives, they settled again in their own Country, and began by Degrees to recruit their Tribe.

AFTER the Death of *Othniel*, the *Israelites* again revolted from the Service of God, and God, to chastise them for it, suffer'd *Eglon*, King of *Moab*, to subdue them; so that, for eighteen Years together, they were forc'd to be tributary to him. But, upon their Humiliation and Repentance, he rais'd them up a Man, even out of the diminish'd Tribe of *Benjamin*, who wrought their Deliverance, but in a Method no ways to be justify'd, under a less Supposition, than that he had a divine Commission for so doing.

Ehud murders
Eglon,
King of Moab,
and rescues his
Country.

EVERY Year it was customary for the *Israelites* to send a *Present*, or Tribute to the King of *Moab*, and, for that Year,
Ehud,

† All the three great Festivals were to be observ'd in the Place where God settled his Habitation, which was now at *Shiloh*; and therefore, some are of Opinion, that the Feast, here mention'd, was one of these; particularly, they think it was the *Feast of Tabernacles*, because this was a Season of great Joy, for having newly gather'd their Vintage, and the only Season, wherein the *Jewish* Virgins were allow'd to dance. At this Time they dwelt in Booths too, behind which the *Benjamites* (as they fancy) might very conveniently conceal themselves, and so watch an Opportunity of carrying away the Virgins: But what seems to make against this Opinion is, that, at any of these publick Festivals, the Concourse of People would have been too great for a Design of this Nature to be put in Execution, since the Violence, which must of Course have been offer'd to the young Women, would hardly have met with a general Connivance. 'Tis much more probable therefore, that this was some Festival peculiar to the People of *Shiloh*, which the *Benjamites* perhaps might know nothing of, and were therefore put in Mind of it by the *Elders of the Congregation*. *Josephus* tells us, that it was celebrated thrice every Year: And on this Festival it might be a Custom for the young Women to go out into the Fields, and there dance by themselves, which might give their Ravishers the very Opportunity they wanted. *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

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Ehud, the Son of *Gera*, was appointed to go with it. He was a left-handed Man; and, having a Design either to free his Country from this Oppression, or perish in the Attempt, he had for this Purpose provided himself with a Poniard, which he conceal'd on his right Side. After he had deliver'd the Present, pretending he had something of great Importance to communicate to the King, he obtain'd a private Audience of him; when, taking his Opportunity, he stabb'd him with the Poniard to the Heart, and so shutting the Door after him, had Time to make his Escape. For, as the King was a very corpulent Man, his Attendants suppos'd that he was either reposing or easing himself, and therefore forbore to enter into his Apartment, until *Ehud* was quite gone. As soon as he came to Mount *Ephraim*, he gather'd together the *Israelites* that lay nearest him; acquainted them with what he had done; and then securing the Fords of *Jordan*, that none of them might escape,

he fell upon the *Moabites*; and destroy'd them all; so that, after this Conquest, the eastern Part of the Land of *Canaan* enjoy'd a settled Peace. † for the Space of *four score Years*.

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i. to the End
of Ruth.

BUT tho' the eastern Coast was at Rest, yet the west Parts of the Kingdom were sadly molested by the Incursions of the *Philistines*, who dwelt upon the same Shore of the *Mediterranean-Sea*. Upon this Occasion, † *Shamgar*, the Son of *Anah*, asserted the Cause of *Israel*; and, having receiv'd extraordinary Vigour from above, with no better Weapon than an *Ox-goad*, slew, at divers Times, six hundred of these Invaders, and preserv'd the Peace of the Country for eight Years.

IN the North Parts of the Country however, the Idolatry, which *Micah* began, propagated apace; so that God, being highly incens'd at the People's Impieties, permitted *Jabin*, who, at that Time, assum'd the Title of King of *Canaan*, and † had fix'd his Imperial Seat at *Hazor*,

Deborah and Barak, conquer Sisera, the General of Jabin's Forces.

to

† There are two Ways, wherein the Land (as it is in the Text) may be said to have had Rest *four score Years*. If by the Land, we understand the whole Kingdom of *Israel*, the Meaning must be, that it rested about *four score Years*, or the greatest Part of *four score Years*: Because it is a very common Thing in Scripture, to use Numbers in this Latitude, and, instead of a minute Computation, to make mention of the round Sum. Thus the *Israelites* are said to bear their Iniquities *forty Years* in the Wilderness, Numb. xiv. 33. when there wanted almost two Years of that Number; and to dwell in Egypt *four hundred and thirty*, when, strictly speaking, there wanted several of it: And, in like Manner, the Land is here said to have had Rest *four score Years*, when it is declared, at the same Time, that the People serv'd the King of *Moab* *eighteen* of them; nor is it any uncommon Thing, in other Authors, as well as the sacred, to use this Form of Expression. But 2dly, if by the Land, we understand only such or such a Part of it, the Solution is easy. For, it is but supposing, that there were scarce any of the Judges, who rul'd over the whole Country of *Israel*, but some in one Part, and some in another; so that, at the same Time, there were several Judges in the Land, and Peace in one Part, when there was War in another; and then we may (with the learned Sir *John Marsham*) understand here by the Land, which had Rest *four score Years*, not the whole Land of *Israel*, but the Eastern Part of it only, which had shaken off the Yoke of *Moab*, while, in the mean Time, the *Philistines* invaded the Western Parts, even as *Jabin* afflicted the Northern, as we may see in the following Chapter. *Pool's* Annotations, and *Patrick's* Commentary.

† Of what Tribe this valiant Person was, we are no where inform'd; but it is not unlikely, that he was of one of those Tribes, which border'd upon the *Philistines*, *Judah*, *Dan*, or *Ephraim*, because what he did, was against them. It is disputed by some, whether he is to be reckon'd among the Number of the Judges; but for this, I think, there is no Foundation. The short Account, which the Scripture gives of him, is this: — And after him, i. e. after *Ehud*, was *Shamgar*, the Son of *Anah*, which slew of the *Philistines* six hundred Men with an *Ox-goad*, and also deliver'd *Israel*, Judg. iii. 31. After *Ehud* was *Shamgar*, i. e. he succeeded him in the Office of a Judge, for this is the natural Sense of the Words; and he also deliver'd *Israel*, which is the very Phrase, whereby the Judges are describ'd. It is not said indeed from what Oppressions he deliver'd him; but he is a Deliverer, who preserves a Nation from being oppress'd, as well as he, who rescues them from an Oppression when they groan under it. This, in all Probability, was *Shamgar's* Case, who, when the *Philistines* invaded his Country, gave them a Repulse, with the Loss of six hundred of their Men, which was enough to discourage them from all future Attempts. And indeed, the great Slaughter which he made among them, with a Weapon, in all Appearance, so incompetent for the Work, argues him to have been a Judge, and possess'd of a Divine Power, as much as *Sampson* was, who slew a thousand of his Enemies with the Jaw-bone of an *Ass*. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

† It is very certain, that *Joshua* burnt the City *Hazor*, and slew the King thereof, whose Name in like Manner was *Jabin*, which might possibly be the common Name to all the Kings of the Country, as those of *Egypt* were call'd *Pharaoh*; But it seems not improbable, that this *Hazor* might be retaken, and rebuilt by its ancient Inhabitants,

and

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to oppress them with great Severity for forty Years. This Prince had made *Sifera*, (* an experienc'd Soldier: no doubt) General of his Forces, wherein, besides great Store of other *military* Munition, there were nine hundred arm'd Chariots, which terrify'd the *Israelites* to such a Degree, that * several Tribes, (a) despairing of Relief, sat still under their Oppression, and some of them were going (b) to transport themselves into other Countries. For their Enemies were so very cruel to them, that they durst not travel the common Roads, nor dwell in Villages, for fear of

being murder'd or plunder'd; and, having no Arms left to defend themselves, they were forc'd to retire to fortify'd Places, and there live together in the utmost Consternation.

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IN the midst of this Distress, † *Deborah*, the Prophetess, a Woman of great Eminence, and who, for some Time, had administer'd Justice to the neighbouring Tribes, sent to *Barak*, the Son of *Abinoam*, a Message from God, that he should get together ten Thousand Men of the Tribes of *Zebulun* and *Naphtali*, and march them to † Mount *Tabor*, whither *Sifera*,

and that this King might be a Descendant of the other. Some indeed interpret the Words thus — That this *Jabin* was King of that Part of *Canaan*, which lay in the Country, where *Hazor* formerly stood, and whose Seat then was at *Harosheth of the Gentiles*; for they understand this Place to be mention'd in the Text, as the Dwelling-place, not of *Sifera*, but of *Jabin* himself, whose General *Sifera* was. But there is no Reason for this Inversion of the Order of the Words, since the *Canaanites* might, between the Time of *Joshua* and *Deborah*, find frequent Opportunities (considering the Corruption and Idleness of the *Israelites*) to re-establish their ancient Kingdom in these Parts, to rebuild their former *Capital*, and to set up one of the old *royal* Line to be their King; who (according to the common Usages of those Ages) retain'd one and the same Name with his Predecessors. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. II. c. 6.

* This *Sifera* (as *Josephus* informs us) was a very great Favourite of the King's, for the Services he had done, in reducing the *Israelites*, whom he worsted upon several Encounters, Time after Time, and would never give over the Pursuit, till he brought them at last to be absolute Slaves, and Tributaries to his Master. *Antiq. lib. v. c. 6.*

* This is the Sense of those obscure Passages in the Song of *Deborah*. *For the Divisions of Reuben there were great Thoughts of Heart. Why abodest thou among the Sheepfolds, to hear the Bleatings of the Flocks? Gilead abode beyond Jordan, and why did Dan remain in Ships? Ashur continued on the Sea-shore, and abode in his Creeks, &c.* *Judg. v. 15, &c.*

(a) *Judg. v. 15, 16.*

(b) *Ibid. viii. 17.*

† The Words *Prophet*, and *Prophetess*, are of very ambiguous Signification in both *Testaments*: Sometimes they denote Persons extraordinarily inspir'd by God, and endu'd with the Power of working Miracles, and foretelling Things to come; and sometimes they are us'd for Persons endu'd with *special*, though not miraculous Gifts, or Graces, for the better understanding and explaining the Word of God; and of this Sort were the Sons of the Prophets, or such as were brought up in the Schools of the Prophets. As therefore we read nothing of any miraculous Action, that *Deborah* did, she perhaps was only a Woman of eminent Holiness, and Prudence, and Knowledge of the holy Scripture, by which she was singularly qualify'd to judge the People, i. e. to determine Causes and Controversies among them, according to the Word of God. For, though *Jabin* oppress'd them sorely, yet it was rather by rigorous Taxations, than infringing their Laws, which he still suffer'd to be administer'd by their own Officers: And of this he might take the less Notice, because the supreme Judicature was exercis'd by a Woman, from whose Power and Authority he thought there was no Reason to apprehend any Danger; though this certainly gave her an Opportunity of endearing herself to the People, and made her, by this Means, the fitter Instrument to rescue them from Oppression. *Pool's Annotations.*

† *Tabor* is a very remarkable Mountain in *Galilee*, not far from *Kadesb*, in the Tribe of *Zebulun*, and in the Confines of *Issachar* and *Naphtali*. It has its Name from its *Eminence*, because it rises up in the midst of a wide champaign Country, call'd the Valley of *Jezreel*, or the great Plain. *Josephus* tells us, that the Height of this Mountain is thirty *Stadia*, and that on the Top of it, there is a beautiful Plain of twenty *Stadia* in Circumference. By all which it appears how commodious a Place this Mountain was, to be the Rendezvous of *Barak's* Forces, since it stood upon the Confines of so many different Tribes, was not accessible by the Enemies Horses and Chariots, and had, on the Top it, a spacious Plain, where he might conveniently marshal and discipline his Army. What modern Travellers tell us of this Mountain is much to the same Purpose: — “ After a very laborious Ascent, (says Mr *Maunderell*) we reach'd the highest Part of the Mountain, which has a plain *Arca* at Top, fertile and delicious, and of an oval Figure, about one Furlong in Breadth, and two in Length. This *Arca* is inclos'd with Trees on all Parts, except towards the South, and from hence you have a Prospect, which (if nothing else) well rewards the Labour of ascending it; for it is impossible for the Eyes of Man to behold any greater Gratification of this Nature. The Top of this Mountain was antiently environ'd with Walls, and Trenches, and other Fortifications, of which some Remains are still visible; and, for many Ages, it has been believ'd, that here it was, that our blessed Saviour was transfigured, in the Presence of his three Apostles, *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, though some later Writers have made a Doubt of it.” *Calmet's Commentary*, *Pool's Annotations*, and *Maunderell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.*

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Sifera, with all his numerous Army, coming to give him Battle, should infallibly be routed. *Barak* readily agreed to the Motion, upon Condition, that the *Prophets* would go with him: And so, having muster'd up his Complement of Forces, they both went together, and posted themselves upon Mount *Tabor*. *Sifera* had soon Intelligence of this; and, getting a powerful Army together, he made hasty Marches from † *Harosheth*; pass'd the * River *Kishon*; and encamp'd at the Foot of the Mountain, in hopes of cutting off *Barak's* Retreat. Upon this, *Deborah* advis'd *Barak* not to stay till *Sifera* came up to him, but, early next Morning, to march directly down, and fall upon him, with all the Assurance imaginable of Success. The *Hebrew* General follow'd her Directions; and, coming

down upon the Enemy before they were aware, he charg'd with such Fury, * whilst God, at the same Time, (by a driving Storm of Rain and Hail in their Faces,) struck them with such Terror, that they were not able to stand before the *Israelites*, but were soon broken, and put to Flight. The Pursuit however continu'd all Day; and, as the Night approach'd, the Stars shone with an uncommon Brightness, to give Light to the Pursuers; and the River *Kishon*, * being swell'd with the hasty Rain, drown'd the Pursu'd, and carry'd the dead Bodies away towards the *Mediterranean-Sea*.

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S I S E R A, in the mean Time, seeing his whole Army broken and dispers'd, quitted his Chariot, and was making his Escape on Foot; when *Jael*, the Wife † of *Heber* the *Kenite*, seeing him coming, went

*Jael puts him
to Death.*

† A Place, situated upon the Lake *Semichon*, in the *Upper Galilee*, and is, in Scripture, called *Harosheth of the Gentiles*, because the People of several Nations fled thither to be under *Jabin's* Protection, when they heard that he had possess'd himself of that Country, and kept the *Israelites* out of it. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. II.

* This River rises out of Mount *Tabor*, and, passing along the Valley of *Fezriel*, (now the Plain of *Esdraelon*) empties itself into the *Mediterranean-Sea*. Some Geographers will needs have it, that this River runs two Ways, partly westward, into the *Mediterranean*, and partly eastward, into the *Sea of Galilee*; but this is a Thing incredible, and what is known of no other River in the World; and therefore, if there be any thing in it, the Matter must be this — That, from Mount *Tabor*, (as it happens from many other Hills) there flow Waters out of two of its Sides, some shaping their Course westward, to the *Mediterranean*, and others eastward, into the *Sea of Galilee*: So that there are two Spring-heads, and two distinct Rivers, though both arising from the same Mountain, and perhaps both called by the same Name. But whatever becomes of the River that runs eastward, 'tis plain, from another Passage, that the *Kishon*, which is mention'd in Scripture, ran westward into the *Mediterranean-Sea*; for, when *Elijah* had convinc'd the People, assembl'd together at Mount *Carmel*, that *Baal* was not the true God, he enjoin'd them to seize all his Priests, and to bring them down to the Brook *Kishon*, there to be slain, 1 *Kings* xviii. So that the Brook *Kishon*, which rises out of Mount *Tabor*, must run by Mount *Carmel*, which stands on the *Sea-shore*; and, as *Carmel* stands West of Mount *Tabor*, the Course of the River, which extends from the one to the other, must be so likewise. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. II. c. 6.

* *Josephus* relates the Manner of God's Interposition in this Action, in the following Words. "The Armies were no sooner engag'd, but there arose a violent Wind, with a most impetuous Tempest of Hail and Rain along with it. The Storm, driving just in the Face of the *Canaanites*, made not only their Bows and their Slings useless, but their Weapons likewise design'd for close Fight; for they could not so much as open their Eyes against the Weather; and their Fingers were so benumb'd with Cold too, that they could not handle their Arms. — In the Conclusion, it came to pass, that the *Canaanites* Army was broken, dispers'd, and cut to Pieces: So that, betwixt those that fell by the Sword, those that were trampled to Death under the Horses Feet, those that were torn to Pieces by the Chariots, and those that fled away, and fell into the Hands of the *Israelites* in their Flight, this prodigious Army, which (according to our Author) consisted of thirty Thousand Foot, ten Thousand Horse, and three Thousand armed Chariots, was, in effect, totally destroy'd." *Antiq. lib. v. c. 6.*

* Mr *Maundrell* tells us, that, in the Condition wherein he saw this River, its Waters were low and inconsiderable; but, in passing along the Side of the Plain, he discern'd the Tracks of many lesser Torrents falling down into it from the Mountains, which must needs make it swell exceedingly upon sudden Rains. Journey from *Aleppo* to *Jerusalem*.

† He was of the Posterity of *Hobab*, the Son of *Jethro*, Father-in-Law of *Moses*; and is here call'd a *Kenite*, because originally, he descended from those People who dwelt westward of the *Dead-Sea*, and extended themselves pretty far into *Arabia Petraea*. The Word *Ken* (from whence they took their Name) signifies a Nest, an Hole, or a Cave; and to this the Prophet *Balaam* might allude, when he address'd himself to them in these Words: — Strong is thy dwelling Place, and thou puttest thy Nest on a Rock: Nevertheless the *Kenite* shall be wasted, until *Assur* shall carry thee away captive, *Numb. xxiv. 21.* These *Kenites* indeed were some of the People, whose Lands God had promis'd

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went to meet him, and invited him into her Tent; which he readily accepted, as apprehending no Danger from her, whose Husband was his Master's Ally. The Fatigue of the Day had made him very thirsty, and therefore he intreated *Jael* to give him a little Water; but when, instead of Water, she had given him as much Milk as he desir'd, and he had strictly charg'd her to deny him, in Case that any body should enquire for him, he laid himself down to rest. No sooner was he well asleep, but *Jael*, taking an Hammer and a long Tent-Nail, set it to his Temples, and struck with such a Force, that it quite pierc'd through his Head, and pinned him to the Ground; and when *Barak*, in Pursuit of him, came that Way, she call'd him in, and shew'd him the Place, and Posture, in which his Enemy lay.

Deborah
makes a tri-
umphant Song
upon the whole
Occasion.

THIS Victory, which was follow'd * with new Successes every Day, put an End to the Oppression of the *North* for forty Years. It prov'd the utter Ruin of this Kingdom of the *Canaanites* in *Hazor*: And, upon many accounts, was attended with so many signal Events, that the Prophetess *Deborah* thought it not amiss to

compose a *triumphant* Song in Commemoration of it; wherein she magnifies the Deliverance it wrought, by recounting the many Calamities, which the *Israelites* before labour'd under; acknowledges its proceeding from the same divine Being, who descended in great Majesty to give the Law on Mount *Sinai*; calls upon all those, who partook in the Benefits of it, to join in the Praises of its great Author; commends those Tribes, that came readily to the War, and upbraids all those, who declin'd their Countries Service.

DURING this forty Years Peace, the People again rebell'd against God, and God took the Punishment of them into his own Hands, by sending upon them a grievous Famine, wherein several were forc'd to remove into strange Countries; and, among the rest, † one *Elimelech*, a Man of *Bethlehem*, with his Wife *Naomi*, and his two Sons, *Mahlon* and *Chilion*, went into the Land of *Moab* to live. *Elimelech* died there, and his *Relict* marry'd her Sons to two Women of the Country, whose Names were *Orpah* and *Ruth*. About two Years after this, *Naomi*'s two Sons died, and she, resolving to return to her own Country, desir'd her Daughters-

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in-

to the Descendants of *Abraham*; nevertheless, in Consideration of *Jethro*, all that submitted to the *Israelites*, were permitted to live in their own Country. In *Numb. x. 29.* we find, that *Hobab* was invited by *Moses* to accompany him into the Land of *Canaan*, and, in all Probability, he accepted the Invitation. At their first Coming, they settled themselves in the Territories of *Jericho*; but, having contracted a particular Friendship with the Tribe of *Judah*, they remov'd with them into the Country, that fell to their Lot, *Judg. i. 16.* Every Family of them, however, did not so, for this *Heber* we find, for some Reasons, that are not mention'd, had settl'd his Habitation in the Tribe of *Naphtali*, *Judg. i. 11.* The *Kenites* indeed, though they were *Proselytes*, and worshipp'd the true God according to the *Mosaic* Law, yet being Strangers by Birth, and so not pretending to any Right or Title to the Land of *Canaan*, held it best Policy, in those troublesome Times, to observe a *Neutrality*, and maintain Peace, as well as they could, both with the *Israelites* and *Canaanites*; and upon this Foot it was, that there was a Peace with King *Jabin* and the House of *Heber*, and that *Sisera*, in his Distress, fled to *Heber*'s Tent for Protection, and put Confidence in the feign'd Civilities of his Wife. *Howell's History of the Bible.*

* *Josephus* farther acquaints us, that immediately after this Victory, *Barak* march'd with his Army towards *Hazor*, where he encounter'd *Jabin* by the Way, and slew him; and, having kill'd the King, laid the City level with the Ground, and afterwards govern'd *Israel* for a matter of forty Years. *Antiq. lib. v. c. 6.*

† The Book of *Ruth*, which takes its Title from the Person, whose Story is there principally recorded, is properly an Appendix to the Book of *Judges*, and an Introduction to that of *Samuel*, and is therefore not only plac'd between them, but suppos'd to be wrote by one and the same Hand. Its Subject is very different from the rest, and is therefore made a distinct Treatise. It is indeed of so private a Nature, that, at the Time of its being wrote, the Generality of the People might have thought it not worth recording; but we *Christians* may plainly see the Wisdom of God in having it done. It had been foretold to the *Jews*, that the *Messiah* should be of the Tribe of *Judah*, and it was afterwards revealed farther, that he should be of the Family of *David*: And therefore it was necessary, for the full understanding these Prophecies, that the History of the Family of *David*, in that Tribe, should be written before these Prophecies were reveal'd, that so there might not be the least Suspicion of any Fraud or Design. And thus this Book, these Prophecies, and the Accomplishment of them, serve to illustrate, and explain each other. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology, Lib. v. c. 5.*

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in-law to remain in *Moab*. *Orpah*, with Tears, took leave of her Mother; but *Ruth* could, by no means, be perswaded to part with her, and therefore she accompany'd her to *Bethlehem*, where, by † her Mother's Art and Contrivance, she so manag'd the Matter, that she marry'd *Boaz*, by whom she had *Obed*, who was the Father of *Jesse*, and the Grand-Father of *David*, and from whom (according to the Flesh) the Saviour of the World was lineally descended.

The Midianites oppress the Israelites.

AFTER the Death of *Deborah* and *Barak*, the *Israelites* fell again into their old Impiety, and were again given up into the Hand of their Enemies. The *Midianites* were a People situated on the East Side of the River *Jordan*, whom the Children of *Israel*, in their Passage to the Land of *Canaan*, (c) had almost totally destroy'd; but it is not improbable, that some of that Nation, saving themselves by Flight into other Countries, and, after the *Israelites* were settled in *Canaan*, returning thither again, might, in the Space of two hundred Years, repossess the Land, where

they dwelt before, and still retain the Name of *Midianites*. These People, together with their Neighbours, the *Amalekites*, † and some other eastern Nations, for seven Years, kept the *Israelites* in such Subjection, that they were forc'd to betake themselves to the Mountains, and to dwell in Dens, and Caves, and fortify'd Places, from whence, as the *Spring* came on, they stole out, to cultivate and sow their Land; but all to no Purpose: For, towards the Time of *Harvest*, these Enemies made Inroads into the Country, and, having destroy'd the Increase of the Earth, and kill'd all the Cattle which fell into their Hands, they then return'd home, and left the poor *Israelites* nothing to support themselves withal. Upon this fore Calamity, the People began to be sensible of their *Apostacy*, and to humble themselves under the afflicting Hand of God; whereupon God † sent them a *Prophet*, who reproach'd them sharply with their base Ingratitude, but, at the same Time, † sent his Angel to *Gideon*, the Son of *Joash*, who dwelt at † *Ophrah*, and was then

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God makes Choice of Gideon for their Deliverer.

† The whole Management of this Affair is recorded in the Book of *Ruth*, to which we refer our Reader, having less Reason to be prolix in a Matter that concerns a private Family only, and what had not been related in such a particular Manner, but for the Reasons that we have already assign'd.

(c) Numb. xxxi. 7, &c.

† Tho' the *Midianites* were the principal People concern'd in these Invasions and Inroads, yet, besides the *Amalekites*, they had other confederate Nations, who are call'd the *Children of the East*, Judg. vi. 3, 33. by whom we may understand the *Ammonites*, and *Moabites*, as lying East of the Land of *Israel*, if not the *Ismaelites*, and others that inhabited the Parts of *Arabia*. The *Children* or People of the East, in Gen. xxix. 1. denote the Inhabitants of *Mesopotamia*; but these seem to be too far distant to have any Part in these IncurSIONS; and therefore, since we read, (Gen. xxv. 6) that *Abraham* sent away the Sons of his Concubines, particularly the Sons of *Keturah*, (one whereof was *Midian*, the Father of the *Midianites*) eastward, into the East Country, it may not improbably be inferr'd, that, by the *Children of the East*, in this History of *Gideon*, are denoted the Descendants of the other Sons of *Keturah*, and of the other Brothers of *Midian*, who had settled themselves in the eastern Parts, adjoining to *Midian*. *Wells's* Geography of the Old Testament.

† Who this *Prophet* was, we have no Manner of Intimation given us. The *Jews* generally fancy, that he was *Phineas*; but *Phineas* must by this Time have been above two hundred Years old, which far exceeded the stated Period of human Life then. St *Austin* is of Opinion, that he was the same with the *Angel*, which soon after appear'd to *Gideon*; but it is far more likely, that God still continu'd other Prophets among the *Israelites*, besides the High-Priest, to put them in mind of their Duty, and to call them to Repentance, when they forsook him: For, from the Case of *Deborah*, who is said to have had the Spirit of Prophecy, it appears, that, at least in extraordinary Cases, God fail'd not to raise up such Persons among them. It is remark'd however of this *Prophet*, (be he who he will) that he gave the *Israelites* no Hopes of the Divine Assistance, but only upbraided them with their Sins. However, when he tells them, that their Calamities was occasion'd by their Idolatry, he plainly intimates, that, if they would return to the true Worship of God, he would again look graciously upon them, and deliver them; and accordingly we find, that the History of their Deliverance immediately follows. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

† That he was not a mere created Angel, is plain from the incommunicable Name *Yehowab*, which he assumes, and whereby he suffers himself so frequently to be call'd, Judges vi. 14, 16, 23, 24, 25, 27. And therefore the *Jews*, according to their *Targum*, which styles him the Word of the Lord, look upon this Angel, not merely as an heavenly Messenger sent from God, but as the Son of God himself appearing in the Form of an Angel. *Patrick's* Commentary.

† *Gideon* was of the Family of *Abieser*, of the Tribe of *Manasseh*; and so the *Ophrah*, where he dwelt, must be understood

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then threshing out his Corn, in a private and unsuspected Place, the better to conceal it from the Depredation of the Enemy.

To him the Angel signify'd the Purport of his Message, which was to acquaint him, that the Lord had made Choice of him for the Deliverance of his People. *Gideon* at first excus'd himself upon Account of the Obscurity of his Family and Fortune; and, when the Angel urg'd the Thing, he desir'd of him some Token of the Divine Mission, and, at the same Time, requested him to accept of a small Entertainment from his Hands. The Angel seem'd not to refuse the Invitation, whereupon *Gideon* hasten'd, and having boil'd a Kid, and made some unleaven'd Cakes, he spread a Table, and set them before him; but the Angel order'd him to take them thence, and place them upon a Rock hard by, and so pour the Broth upon them, which, though it might seem a little strange, *Gideon* did; and, as soon as the Angel had touch'd them with the Staff that was in his Hand, immediately there issu'd Fire out of the Rock, which consum'd them, whilst himself, at the same Time, vanish'd out of Sight.

CONVINCD by this Miracle, that it was a Messenger from Heaven who appear'd to him, *Gideon* began to fear (as the Notion then was) that he should not long survive it; but being assur'd by the Angel (tho' then invisible) that no Harm should befall him, he built a Monument, which he called *Jehovah-shalom*, i. e. *the Lord of Peace*, in Commemoration of this gracious

Interview; and, being that Night admonish'd in a Dream to destroy the Altar of *Baal*, and cut down the Grove that surrounded it; to build an Altar to God upon the Top of this wonderful Rock, and to offer a Burnt-Sacrifice to him with one of his Father's Bullocks, he readily obey'd: And, taking ten of his Father's Servants with him, demolish'd the *one*, and erected the *other*, by next Morning; chusing the Night to do it in, that he might meet with no Obstruction. On the Morrow, when the People understood that *Gideon* was the Person, who had put this Affront upon *Baal*, they came and demanded him of his Father, that they might put him to Death; but, instead of complying with their Demand, his Father's Answer was, "That, "† if *Baal* was a God, it was *his* Business, and not *theirs*, to avenge his own "Quarrel;" and from this Answer (where-with he appeas'd the Tumult) *Gideon* ever after obtain'd the Name of *Jerub-baal*, i. e. *the Opposer of Baal*.

ABOUT this Time, the *Midianites* and their Company passing over the River *Jordan*, came, and encamp'd in † the Valley of *Jezreel*; upon which, *Gideon*, being mov'd by a Divine Impulse, summon'd all those of his own Family to take up Arms first, and then sent Messengers to several adjacent Tribes, exhorting them to shake off the Yoke of the *Midianites*, and to join with him; which accordingly they did, and came in such Numbers, that, in a short Time, his Army amounted to two and thirty Thousand Men, though small in Comparison of the Enemies Forces, which

understood to be situated in the half Tribe of *Manasseh*, on the West Side of *Jordan*, and for this Reason it is stil'd *Ophrah* of the *Abiezrites*, (Judges viii. 32.) to distinguish it from another *Ophrah*, that lay in the Tribe of *Benjamin*. *Will's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. III. c. 6.

† 'Tis generally suppos'd, that *Gideon's* Father had been a Worshipper, if not a Priest of *Baal*; and therefore it is not unlikely, that he had at this Time been convinc'd by his Son, that God had given him a Commission to recover his People, and to begin with this Reformation; and this made him appear so boldly in his Son's Cause, because he knew it was the Cause of God. *Pool's Annotations*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The City of *Jezreel* (which gave Name to the Valley) belong'd to the half Tribe of *Manasseh*, on the West of *Jordan*, and lay in the Confines of that half Tribe and the Tribe of *Issachar*, as appears from *Josh. xix. 18*. In the History of the Kings of *Israel*, this City is frequently made mention of, where, by Reason of the Pleasantness of its Situation, some of them had a Royal Palace, tho' their Capital was *Samaria*. The Vale of *Jezreel* (which, as we said before, is now call'd the Plain of *Esdraelon*) is, according to Mr *Mammoth*, of a vast Extent, very fertile, but uncultivated, and only serving the *Arabs* for Pasturage: But some have suppos'd, that the Valley of *Jezreel* here mention'd denotes some other lesser Valley, lying between Mount *Hermion* and Mount *Gilboa*. *Will's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. II. c. 6.

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*He vanquishes
the Midia-
nites, in what
Manner.*

which consisted of no less than a hundred and thirty-five Thousand.

As soon as each Tribe's Complement of Men was arriv'd, *Gideon* (being willing to satisfy them, that he did not act this on his own Head, but was the Person appointed by Heaven to be their *Leader* and *Deliverer*) desir'd of God to give them some Token of his Commission; and the Token, which he made choice of, was, — That, upon his laying a *Fleece* of Wool on the Ground, † the Dew might be upon the Fleece only, and the Earth round about it be dry, which accordingly happen'd; and then, inverting the former Manner he desir'd, that the Fleece might be dry, while the Ground all a-round it was wet, which accordingly came to pass likewise. Confirm'd by these Signs, that it was the Will of God that he should enter upon Action, *Gideon* march'd directly to the Camp of the *Midianites*, who then lay in the Plain of *Jezreel*; but, before he came thither, God rightly foreseeing, that, if this Army

conquer'd the *Midianites*, they would vainly impute it to their own Courage or Numbers, and not to his Assistance, order'd *Gideon* to make *Proclamation* in the Camp, that whoever was diffident of the Success of the Undertaking, should have Liberty to return Home: Whereupon two and twenty Thousand quitted the Field, so that ten Thousand only remain'd with him. It might be thought possible however, for these ten Thousand to defeat the Army of the *Midianites*; and therefore God, resolving that the Glory of the whole Victory should be accounted his own, order'd *Gideon* to † lead the Soldiers down to the Water to drink, where he would give him a Signal, what Men were fit for his Purpose, and what not; and the Signal was this, — That they, who † took up Water in their Hands, and lapped it, should go with him; but they, who laid themselves down to drink, should be dismiss'd; which Experiment reduc'd them to no more than three hundred.

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THESE

† He suppos'd that the Dew, which distill'd from Heaven, was a Divine Gift, (as the Scripture after testifies) and therefore he desir'd that it might be directed by God, that, tho' it commonly falls every where, by his extraordinary Providence, it might now water only his Fleece. Some are apt to think, that he chose a Fleece for his Purpose, not only because it was ready at hand, but the better to express how the Land was *born* by the *Midianites*, even as the Sheep had been by him; that when he begg'd the Dew (as a Sign of the Divine Favour) might fall upon the Fleece, it was to represent the Kindness of God to *him*; and when he begg'd it might fall upon the whole Ground, to represent his Favour to *all the People*. But there is a farther Reason, why he might desire to have the Miracle inverted: For, as it is in the very Nature of the Wool to draw Moisture to it, some might be apt to think, that there was no great Matter in this; and therefore he requested of God a second Miracle, which was contrary to the former. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† Mr *Le Clerc* is of Opinion, that the *sacred Historian* has omitted one Circumstance, which, nevertheless, in the very Nature of the Thing, is imply'd, *viz.* that *Gideon*, when he led his Men down to the Water, did forbid them to make use of any Cup, or Pot, or such like Thing: For he thinks it incongruous, (as well he may) that, among such a Number, as ten Thousand Men, no one should be furnish'd with some drinking Vessel or other. But then, had any of these been permitted to be us'd upon this Occasion, the Experiment could not have been made. *Comment. in Jud. vii. 6.*

† Interpreters are at a sad Puzzle to conceive, for what possible Reason God made a Distinction between the Soldiers who lapp'd Water in their Hands, and those that laid themselves down to drink. Some of the *Jewish Doctors* are of Opinion, that all, except the three Hundred, who lapp'd, had been accusom'd to the Worship of *Baal*, which they unwarily discover'd by their kneeling to drink: But this is a groundless, and far-fetch'd Conceit. The Notion of those, who impute these three Hundred Men's Lapping *some* to their *Sloth* and *Laziness*, and *others* to their *Timorousness*, and the great Fear they were in of being surpris'd by the Enemy, is of no more Validity: For though God, if he thought fit, might have employ'd the most *dastardly* among them upon this Expedition, that the Glory of the Victory might entirely redound to himself; yet since, as we are told, all the fearful Persons were dismiss'd before, and since it but badly befits the Character of the *Courageous* to be *lazy*; this Action of *Lapping* is rather to be accounted a Token of their *Temperance*, and of the Nobleness of their Spirit, which made them so desirous to engage the Enemy that they would not stay to drink, but (tho' they were very thirsty) contented themselves to *moisten their Mouths*, as we say, with a little Water; whereas the rest indulg'd themselves so far, as to drink their Belly-full. But after all, the true Reason and Design of this Method seems to be only this, — That God was minded to reduce *Gideon's* Army to a very small Number, which might very likely be done by this Means. For, as the Season of the Year was hot, and the Generality of the Soldiers weary, thirsty, and faint, it was most probable, that they would lye down, (as indeed they did) and refresh themselves plentifully, and scarce to be expected, that any great Number would deny themselves in this Matter. *Patrick's Commentary, and Saurin's Gédéon Defait les Madiantes.*

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THESE three hundred Men he order'd to hold themselves in Readiness, and to have every one a Trumpet, a Lamp, and an empty Pitcher to conceal the Light, which the Lamp would otherwise give; and, while they were providing themselves with these, he took his Servant with him, and went down the Enemies Camp, where he heard a *Midianite* relating his Dream to his Companion, which the other interpreted in *Gideon's* Favour; so that returning to the Camp, he drew his Men out, and dividing them into three Companies of an hundred Men each, he came upon the Enemy † in the dead Time of the Night. The Watch-Word was, *the Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon*; and, as every Soldier had Directions to do, as their *General* did, they all broke their Pitchers, brandish'd their Lamps, and sounded their Trumpets together.

THE *Midianites*, hearing so many Trumpets, and seeing so many Lights at once, suppos'd themselves to be attack'd by a formidable Army; and so rising in a Fright, and mistaking their Friends for their Enemies, † they fell upon one another, until they had put every Thing into the utmost Confusion. By this Means, *Gideon*, having obtain'd an easy Victory, sent to the rest of the Army, who, upon his *Proclamation*, had withdrawn themselves, some to pursue the routed Enemy, and others to secure the Passes of the Ri-

ver *Jordan*, in order to prevent their Retreat.

THE Passes however could not be all secur'd: So that, some of the Enemies Troops having made a Shift to cross the River, *Gideon*, with his three hundred Men, press'd hard after them, while the other Part of the Army destroy'd those, who staid behind; and, having taken the two *Midianitish* Princes, † *Oreb*, and *Zeeb*, they cut off their Heads, and sent them to *Gideon*.

GIDEON, in the mean Time, and his small Party, were in full Chase of two other Princes of *Midian*, *Zeba* and *Zalmunna*; and, when he came to *Succoth* and *Penuel*, two Towns on the other Side of *Jordan*, in the Tribe of *Gad*, he desir'd of them some Provision for his Men, because they were faint and weary: But, instead of giving him any Refreshment, they ridiculed the Smallness of his Army, for which Insolence he vow'd to be reveng'd of them upon his Return. Continuing his Pursuit therefore, with his small fatigu'd Party, he came up with the Enemy at *Karcor*, where the two *Midianitish* Kings, thinking that they had now sufficiently escap'd, were regardless of all Danger: But *Gideon*, falling upon them unexpectedly, surpris'd and defeated them, and, having taking them Prisoners, carry'd them in Triumph with him unto *Succoth*, where he executed the Vengeance (which he

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And puts their
Kings, and
some others, to
military Exe-
cution.

† The Expression in the Text is, *in the beginning of the middle Watch*: For, though the *Romans*, in After-Ages, divided the Night into four *Watches*, Matth. xiv. 25. yet, in the *Eastern* Parts, and in more ancient Times, it consisted but of *three*, whereof the first began at *six*, and continu'd four Hours. The *second* therefore is call'd the *middle Watch*, and began at *eleven*; so that, we may suppose, that it was some Time after this, that *Gideon* alarm'd the *Midianitish* Camp; and the Reasons, why he chose this Part of the Night to do it in, are obvious, because the Trumpets would then seem to sound louder, and the Lights to shine brighter, and so both increase the Consternation of the Enemy, and conceal the Smallness of his own Army. *Pool's* Annotations.

† There might be several Reasons for their doing this: ——— Either because the Night was so dark, that they could not distinguish Friends from Foes; or because the Thing was so sudden, that it struck them with Horror and Amazement; or because they suspected Treachery, (as they might easily do, since the Army consisted of several Nations, *Judg.* vi. 3.) or because God had *infatuated* them, as he had many others on the like Occasion. *Pool's* Annotations.

† As the Language of the *Ismaelites*, the *Midianites*, and the *Amalekites*, who dwelt in *Arabia*, was originally the same, because they all descended from *Abraham*, their common Father; so we may infer, that there was little or no Difference in them at this Time. *Oreb*, in the *Hebrew*, signifies a *Crow*, and *Zeeb*, a *Wolf*; and these are no improper Words, to represent the *Sagaciousness*, and *Fierceness*, which should be in two such great Commanders. Nor was it an uncommon Thing for great Families, in ancient Times, to derive their Names from such like Creatures, (hence the *Corvini*, *Gracchi*, *Aquilini*, &c. among the *Romans*) either as *Omens*, or *Monuments* of their undaunted Courage, and Dexterity in *military* Achievements. But, after all, it seems every whit as probable, that these were only *Nicknames*, which the *Israelites* gave these two Princes of *Midian*, to denote their Fierceness, and Rapaciousness of Prey. *Balford's* Scripture Chronology, lib. v. c. 3. and *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

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he had threaten'd) by crushing the Princes of that Place to Death under *Thorns* and *Briars*, killing the People of *Penuel*, and demolishing its Fortifications. *Zeba* and *Zalmunna*, in their March, had laid all the Country waste, and put many to the Sword, otherwise *Gideon* was inclinable to have shewn them some Mercy: But understanding, by their own Confession, that they had slain his Brethren at *Tabor*, he order'd his Son *Jether* to fall upon them; but, as he was but a Youth, and seem'd a little timorous, † he himself dispatch'd them with his own Hand, having first order'd them to be stripp'd of their royal Ornaments, and their Camels of their rich Trappings, and Furniture.

THESE great and glorious Actions, in Defence of his Country's Liberty, rais'd *Gideon*'s Name to such a Height, that the People came, and voluntarily offer'd to settle the Government upon him and his Family; which he modestly and generously rejecting, and desiring only (as an Acknowledgment of his Services) to have the *Pendants*, or Ear-Rings, taken in the Plunder of the *Midianites* given him; the People readily consented, and, over

and above these, threw in the costly Ornaments, and the Robes of the Kings, together with the golden † Chains, which were about the Camels' Necks. The whole amounted to a prodigious Value; and of these rich Materials he made an *Ephod*, and plac'd it in the City of *Ophrah*, as a Monument only of his Victory, tho', in After-Times, it came to be perverted to a bad Use, gave Occasion to a fresh *Apostacy*, and prov'd the Ruin of *Gideon*'s Family.

GIDEON, while he liv'd, had several Wives, by whom (in all) he had seventy Sons, besides one by a Concubine, † whom she nam'd *Abimelech*. As soon as his Father was dead, this *Abimelech*, who was a bold aspiring Youth, tamper'd with the People of *Shechem*, the Place of his Nativity, and where his Mother's Family had no small Interest, to make him their King. They, by his Persuasions, were inclinable to do it: And (that he might not want Money to carry on his Design) furnish'd him with some out of the Treasury of † their God *Baal-berith*, wherewith he hir'd a Company of profligate Fellows to attend him. With these

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Abimelech
usurps the Go-
vernment of
Shechem.

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he

† In antient Times, it was as much a Custom, for great Men to do Execution upon Offenders, as it is now an usual Thing, for them to pronounce Sentence upon them. They had not then (as we have now) such Persons, as the Romans call'd *Carnifices*, or publick Executioners; and therefore *Saul* had such as waited on him kill the Priests; and *Doeg*, one of his chief Officers, did it, 1 Sam. xxii. 17, 18. But the Reason why *Gideon* would have had his Son do this Execution, was, that he might be early animated against the Enemies of *Israel*, even as *Hannibal* is reported, when he was a Boy, to have been incens'd against the Romans. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The Word, which we render *Chains*, is in the Original, *little Moons*, which the *Midianites* might wear strung together about their Camels Necks, either by Way of Ornament, or Superstition, because they, as well as all other People of *Arabia*, were very zealous Worshippers of the Moon. *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† What the Names of his other Sons were, we have no Mention made in sacred Writ; but the Name of this one is particularly set down, because the following Story depends upon it: And not only so, but his Mother perhaps might give him this Name (which signifies, *my Father a King*) out of Pride and Arrogance, that she might be look'd upon as the Wife of one, who was thought to deserve a Kingdom, though he did not accept it: And it is not improbable, that the very Sense of this might be one Means to inflame the Mind of her Son afterwards, to affect the Royal Dignity. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The learned *Bochart* is of Opinion, that the *Baal* here mention'd was the same with *Beroë*, the Daughter of *Penus* and *Adonis*, desir'd in Marriage by *Neptune*, but given to *Bacchus*; and that she gave her Name to *Berith* in *Phœnicia*, where she was much worshipp'd, and thence translated a Goddess into other Parts. But, tho' the Word *Baal* (as he maintains) be frequently us'd in a feminine Sense, yet it can hardly be imagin'd, but that the sacred Historian, if he had been minded to express a Goddess, might have found out some Way of distinguishing her; might have call'd her (for Instance) *Babalab-berith*, the Lady, or Goddess of *Berith*, without making Both the Words of a masculine Termination. And therefore the most simple and natural Manner of explaining the Name, is, to take it in general for the God, who presides over Covenants and Contracts, to whom it belongs to maintain them, and to punish all those that violate them. For it is to be observ'd, that the most barbarous, as well as the most knowing, the most religious, as well as the most superstitious Nations have always look'd upon God as the Witness, as well as the Vindicator of Oaths and Covenants; that the Greeks had their *Zeus Horkios*, as well as the Latins their *Jupiter Pifius*, or *Deus Fidius*, or *Fœcialis*, whom they look'd upon as a God of Honesty and Uprightness, always superintending in

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he repair'd to his Father's House at *Ophrah*, and, having seiz'd all his Brethren (except *Jotham*, the youngest, who made his Escape) he slew them all † upon *one Stone*, and when he return'd to *Shechem*, instead of meeting with Detestation for this unnatural Murther, was, in a general Assembly of the People, elected their King.

Jotham's Pa-
rable to the
Shechemites.

WHEN young *Jotham* heard of this, he went upon Mount *Gerizim*, which overlooks the City of *Shechem*, and from thence, in a *parabolical* Speech, represented to † the People his Father's Modesty and Self-denial, in refusing to have the Government settled on him and his Fa-

mily, which they had now conferr'd on *one*, as much inferior in Virtue and Honour to *Gideon*, and his lawful Sons, as the Bramble is to the Olive-Tree, the Fig-Tree, or the Vine: And then expostulating the Injury done his Family, and upbraiding them with their Ingratitude, he appeals to their Consciences, whether they had done right or not, and denounces a Curse against them for their siding with *Abimelech* in all his wicked Deeds.

HAVING thus deliver'd himself to the *Shechemites* *Jotham* made his † Escape to *Beer*, where he liv'd secure from *Abimelech's* Rage; and it was not long before his

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Their Revolt
from Abime-
lech.

Treaties and Alliances. And for this Reason not improbably, the House of their God *Berith* was the Citadel, the Arsenal, and the Treasury of the *Shechemites*, even as *Plutarch* informs us, that in the Temple of *Saturn*, the *Romans* repositied both their Archives and publick Wealth. *Bochart*, *Canaan*, lib. ii. c. 17. *Pool's* Annot. in *Loc. Calmet's* Dictionary, under the Word *Baal-berith*, and *Jurieu*, *Histoire des Dogmes & Cultes*, &c. Part IV. Chap. i.

† This Stone some will have to be an *Altar*, which *Abimelech* dedicated to the Idol *Berith*, and erected in the same Place, where his Father *Gideon* had destroy'd his Altar before; and so they account, that this Slaughter of his Sons was design'd for an *expiatory* Sacrifice of their Father's Crime in demolishing the Altar and Grove dedicated to that Idol. But this is a little too far-fetch'd, though there is hardly any other Reason to be given, why they should all be murder'd upon one and the same Stone. *Patrick's* Commentary, and *Pool's* Annotations.

† This is the first *Fable*, that we find any where upon Record; and from hence it appears, that such Fictions as these, wherein the most serious Truths are represented, were in Use among the *Jews* (as they are still in the *Eastern* Countries) long before the Time of *Æsop*, or any other Author that we know of. Various are the Reasons that may be assign'd for the first Invention of them; but these two seem to be the principal; 1. Because Men would suffer themselves to be reprehended in this Guise, when they would not endure plain Words: And 2dly, Because they heard them with Delight and Pleasure, and remember'd them better, than any grave or rational Discourses.

The Trees went forth on a Time, to anoint a King over them, (So that Anointing was in Use two hundred Years before the first Kings of *Israel*) and they said unto the Olive-Tree, Reign over us. But the Olive-Tree said unto them, Should I leave my Fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and Man, (because Oil was offer'd in Sacrifice to God, and fed the Lamps of his House, besides all the other Uses, wherein it was serviceable to Man) and go to be promoted over the Trees? And the Trees said to the Fig-Tree, Come thou, and Reign over us. But the Fig-tree said unto them, Should I forsake my Sweetness, and my good Fruit, (an apt Representation of that Content, and Fulness of Pleasure, which may be enjoy'd in a private Life, and cannot, without Folly, be exchange'd for the Troubles and Cares, that Men meet with in the Managery of publick Affairs) and go to be promoted over the Trees? Then said the Trees unto the Vine, Come thou, and Reign over us. And the Vine said unto them, Should I leave my Wine, which cheereth God and Man, (a Form of Speech, imitated by Heathen Authors, especially by *Virgil*, (*Georg.* lib. ii.) where, speaking of some generous Wine, he terms it — *Mensis, & Diis accepta secundis*, since Wine, as well as Oil, was us'd both in *Jewish* and *Heathen* Sacrifices) and go to be promoted over the Trees? Then said all the Trees unto the Bramble, (the meanest of all Trees, good for nothing but to be burnt, and therefore fitly representing *Abimelech*, from whom the *Shechemites* could expect no Manner of Benefit, but a great deal of Trouble and Vexation) Come thou, and Reign over us. And the Bramble said unto the Trees, If, in Truth, ye anoint me King, then come and put your Trust in my Shadow; (an apt Emblem of *Abimelech's* ridiculous Vanity, to imagine, that he should be able to maintain the Authority of a King, any more, than the Bramble could afford a Shadow or Shelter) and if not, let Fire come out of the Bramble, and devour the Cedars of Lebanon. (Words that carry a lively Image of *Abimelech's* ostentatious Spirit, and Menaces to take severe Vengeance on the Nobles of *Shechem*, such as the House of *Millo*, who had been chiefly instrumental in his Promotion, in Case they should desert him.) This is the *Parable*; and in some Measure, its Interpretation: The only Difficulty is, to know, whom these Trees are set to signify. And here, some have thought, that, by the Olive-Tree, we are to understand *Othniel*; by the Fig-Tree, *Deborah*; and by the Vine, *Gideon*; for, to the two former, they suppose, that the Offer of the Kingdom was made for the Services done their Country, and by them rejected, as well as by the last. But for this there is no Authority; neither is there any Necessity, in the Explication of such *Fables*, to assign a particular Reason for every Image, that is drawn in them. It is sufficient, if we can but hit of their main Intendment, which, in this of *Jotham*, was to convince the *Shechemites* of their Folly in chusing a Man for their King, who was no more able to protect them, than a Bramble was to cover other Trees, that should resort to it, under the Shadow of its Branches. *Saunders's* Dissertations, and *Patrick's* Commentary.

† This was a City, that stood on the Northern Frontiers of the Tribe of *Judah*, which did not acknowledge *Abimelech* for King, and therefore *Jotham* knew, that he might have sure Refuge and Protection there.

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his Curse began to operate. For the People of *Shechem*, * growing jealous and distrustful of their new King, were for apprehending and killing him, which made him leave the Place, and escape for his Life. As soon as he was gone, they set up another vile Wretch, *Gael*, the Son of *Ebed*, to be their Governor. Under his Protection, the People ventur'd out to reap the Fruits of the Earth, and having, upon this Occasion, made themselves merry, they express'd their Detestation of *Abimelech*, and none was more forward than *Gael* to speak contemptibly of him, and to make his Boasts what he would do with him, if he could but once catch him. *Zebul*, whom *Abimelech* intrusted with his Concerns in his Absence, gave him Intelligence of all that pass'd, and advis'd him to come with some Forces, before it was too late. Accordingly, he marches all Night, divides his Army into four Parts, and, early in the Morning, had beset the City. *Gael*, tho' a very Coward, seeing Matters reduc'd to this Extremity, march'd out with what Forces he had, but was soon defeated, and slain. *Abimelech*, next Day, storm'd the Place, and kill'd all the Inhabitants that came in his Way; but some having betaken themselves to a Fort belonging to the Temple of their God

Berith, he set Fire to it, and destroy'd them all together.

DURING these Times of Confusion, the Town of *Thebez*, not far distant from *Shechem*, revolted; and *Abimelech*, being now flush'd with Victory, besieg'd and took it; but the Inhabitants flying to a strong Tower, he endeavour'd to burn that, as he had done the other, but not with the same Success. For, while he was encouraging his Men, and helping them to set the Gate on Fire, * a Woman threw down a Piece of Millstone upon him, which fractur'd his Scull; so that finding himself mortally wounded, he call'd to his *Armour-Bearer* to put an End to his Life, that it might not be said, he died by the Hand of a Woman. Thus God, in his abundant Righteousness, punish'd both *Abimelech*, and the Men of *Shechem* according to their Deserts; and, within the Space of three Years after their Crimes were committed, made them the Instruments of each other's Destruction.

AFTER the Death of *Abimelech*, *To-lab*, the Son of *Puah*, an eminent Man of the Tribe of *Issachar*, undertook the Government, and continu'd it for three and twenty Years. He dwelt on Mount *Ephraim*, near the Center of the Country, that the People might, with more Convenience,

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Who is kill'd by a Woman at Thebez, by the Fall of a large Stone.

Puah and Jair made Judges: Under the latter, the People apostatize, and are oppress'd.

* In the Text the Expression is, *Then God sent an evil Spirit, or Spirit of Discord, between Abimelech and the Men of Shechem*, Judg. ix. 23. which, in Scripture, is an usual Form of Speech, and denotes not any positive Action, but a Permission only, or, at most, a Direction from God. It is observ'd however, that this Manner of Expression may possibly have given Rise to some Notions in the Theology of the *Heathens*, when they suppose, that the *Furies* are appointed by the Gods to sow the Seeds of Discord among Men.

Luſtificam Aleſto, dirarum ab Sede Sororum,
Inferniſque ciet Tenebris; cui triſtia Bella,
Iraque, Incidiaeque, & Crimina noxia Cordi.

And a little lower,

Diſjice compositam Pacem, ſere Crimina Belli:
Arma velit, poſcatque ſimul, rapiatque Juventus.

Virg. Æn. vii.

* Thus *Plutarch* relates, that *Pyrrhus*, at the Siege of *Thebes*, was kill'd by a Woman's throwing a Tile upon his Head; but there is something more remarkable in *Abimelech's* Death by a Stone, because, as he slew all his Brethren upon one Stone, for him to die by no other Instrument carry'd some Stamp of his Sin upon it. The Manner of his Death however, puts me in mind of what the same Author records of the Spartan General, *Lysander*, who fell ingloriously under the Walls of *Haliartus*. "Thus he died, says he, but not like *Cleombrotus*, who was slain, while he was gloriously making Head against an impetuous Enemy at *Leuctra*, not like *Cyrus*, or *Epaminondas*, who receiv'd a mortal Wound, while he was rallying his Men, and securing to them the Victory. These great Men died in their Callings. They died the Death of Kings and Commanders: Whereas he, like some common Soldier, or one of the forlorn Hope, call away his Life ingloriously; giving this Testimony to the ancient Spartans, that they did well to avoid storming of Walls; in which the stoutest Man may chance to fall by the Hand, not only of an abject Fellow, but by that of a Boy, or a Woman, as they say *Achilles* was slain, in the Gates of *Troy*, by the Hands of the effeminate *Paris*." *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Plutarch's Comp. of Lysander*, and *Sylla*.

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veniency, resort to him for Judgment; and, tho' there is not much recorded of him, yet he seems to have been a prudent and peaceable Man; rais'd up to reform Abuses, to put down Idolatry, to appease Tumults, and heal the Wounds, which were given to Church and State, during Abimelech's Usurpation.

He was succeeded by *Jair*, a *Gileadite*, of the Tribe of *Manasseh*, the first Governor that was rais'd up out of any of the Tribes beyond *Jordan*, and who, in the main, seems to have been more solicitous to † aggrandize his own Family, than to mind the Concerns of Religion. For, during his Administration, the People not only worshipp'd *Baalim*, and *Ashtaroth*, as they had frequently done before, but adopted the Gods likewise of every neighbouring Nation, of the *Syrians*, the *Zidonians*, the *Ammonites*, the *Moabites*, and the *Philistines*; so that God, being incens'd against them, incited the *Philistines*, and the *Ammonites* to invade them on all Quarters in one and the same Year. Nor did these People make their Incurfions only

upon the Tribes, that were on the *East* Side of *Jordan*; but, passing the River, gave the Tribes of *Judah*, *Benjamin*, and *Ephraim*, no small Molestation, and, by their fundry Defeats, made them feel the Weight of their Power.

THE *Israelites*, finding themselves not able to cope with such powerful Enemies, grew sensible of their Folly; and, to recover the Protection of God, renounc'd all their *Idols*, and betook themselves to his Service in good earnest; Whereupon, † his Mercy returning with their Repentance, he soon found out Means to affect their Deliverance.

THERE was, at that Time, in the half Tribe of *Manasseh*, which settled on the *East* Side of *Jordan*, a Man of Note among his People, whose Name was *Gilead*, of the Family of that *Gilead*, the Son of *Machar*, to whom *Moses* gave the (d) City of *Gilead*, from whence the Family took their Name. This Man had by his Wife several Sons, and one † by a Concubine, whom he nam'd *Jephthah*; but when his Sons grew up, and their Father

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Jephthah de-
livers them,
and vanquishes
the Ammo-
nites.

† The Reasons, which the Scripture gives us to think, that he really did aggrandize his own Family, are, 1st, Because he is said to have had thirty Sons, that rode on thirty *Asses Colts*: For, as in those Days, the *Israelites* had but few Chariots, and were not allow'd to keep many Horses, the most honourable of them were us'd to be mounted on these Creatures, which, in the *Eastern* Countries, were much higher, and more beautiful, than they are with us. 2dly, They had thirty Cities, or Villages, called after their own Name, in the Land of *Gilead*: For, as we read that *Jair*, the Son of *Manasseh*, went and took the small Towns of *Gilead*, and call'd them *Havoth jair*, (Numb. xxxii. 41. and Deut. iii. 14.) so we may presume, that this *Jair*, who was afterwards Judge of *Israel*, recover'd the Places, which his Ancestor conquer'd, and perhaps added some more to them, that each Son of his might have one. *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

† This is the most remarkable Repentance and Reformation that we meet with in the History of the *Judges*; and it seems to be so serious, that, in the Times of those three Governors, who succeeded *Jephthah*, we read nothing of their relapsing into Idolatry. And, as their Repentance was sincere, so the Expression of the Divine Compassion towards them, viz. that his Soul was grieved for the Misery of *Israel*, Jud. x. 16. is the strongest that we meet with; though every one knows, that the Divine Nature is not capable of Grief, properly so called, but the Meaning is, that he quite alter'd his former Intention, and, in much Mercy, resolv'd, upon their Repentance, to deliver them.

(d) Numb. xxxii. 29.

† Several *Jewish* Doctors are of Opinion, that the Word *Zonah* may signify, either one of another Tribe, or one of another Nation; and so, *Josephus* calls *Jephthah*, ἑτερογενὴς καὶ πατρὸς ὁμογενὴς, a Stranger by the Mother's Side. It is to be observ'd however, that among the *Jews*, if such Persons as were deem'd Strangers embrac'd the Law, their Children were capable to inherit, among the rest of their Brethren. *Jephthah* indeed, complains of the hard Usage he met with, but it was upon this Occasion, when his Country he found stood in need of him; for had he been unjustly dispossest'd of his Right of Inheritance before, we can hardly suppose, that a Man of his Courage and martial Spirit would have sat down contented with his Exclusion. It is not to be doubted therefore, but that he was the Son of an Harlot, properly so call'd: But then the Question is, Why God should make Choice of a Person of his Character for so great an Instrument of his Glory? To which it may be reply'd, 1st, That God has prescrib'd Laws to Men, but none to himself; and can therefore alter his Dispensations as he pleases, according to the Circumstances and Exigencies of Things. 2dly, That as he chuses to act by second Causes, he always makes use of such Instruments, as (all Things consider'd) are properest for his Purpose, without Regard to any Blemishes, for which they themselves are not accountable: And 3dly, That he might purposely dispense with the Law in this Case, to shew, that those, who are basely born ought not to despond, but, by a virtuous and good Life, expect a Share of God's Blessings. *Howell's* History, Lib. iv. in the Notes.

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Father. was dead, they expell'd *Jephthab*, as having no Right of Inheritance with them, so that he was sent to seek his Fortune, and, at length, settled in the † Land of *Tob*; where, being a Man of great Courage and Bravery, he was soon made the *Captain* of a small Army, with whom he us'd to make Excursions into the Enemies Country, and sometimes bring off rich Spoils.

THE *Ammonites* had now rais'd a large Army, with a Design to invade the Country of *Gilead*, and, as it is suppos'd, to lay a Siege to *Gilead* itself. The *Gileadites*, on the other Hand, were resolv'd to defend their Country, and, to that Purpose, had got together what Forces they could; but then they were at a Loss for a *General*. *Jephthab*, they knew, was a Man of Courage and Conduct, who had signaliz'd himself on frequent Occasions against the Enemy; and therefore, in a full Assembly of their *Chiefs*, it was resolv'd to send him an Offer of the Command of their Army. Surpriz'd at this sudden Change, and remonstrating a little their former Unkindness to him, he consented at last to accept of the Command; but it was on this Condition, that, if he happen'd to be successful in the War, they should establish him their Governor for Life, which they readily consented to, and solemnly ratify'd. Being invested with this Power and Authority *Jephthab* sent Ambassadors to the King of *Ammon*, to demand the Reason of his invading the *Gileadites*; to whom that Prince reply'd, that their Land was *his*, and that the *Israelites*, in their Passage from *Egypt*, had taken it from his Ancestors, which he now intended to recover.

Jephthab return'd him, by other Ambassadors, in Answer, that, if either *Conquest* or *Prescription* conferr'd a Title, they had a just Right to the Country they possess'd; since they took it, not from them, but from the *Ammorites*, and had, for *three hundred Years*, been in quiet Possession of it; but all would not do. The *Ammonites* were resolv'd upon a War, and *Jephthab* made all Things ready to receive them: But, before he took the Field, he * made a Vow, that, if he return'd with Victory, the first Thing that came out of his House to meet him, he would certainly offer unto the Lord, which many think was the Occasion of the sacrificing his own Daughter.

HOWEVER this be, 'tis certain, that when he return'd out of the Country of *Ammon*, where his Battles were fought with Success, he met with some Disturbance at Home; for the Tribe of *Ephraim*, not long after, pass'd the River *Jordan*, on purpose to pick a Quarrel with him, because, (as they pretended) he had not sent for them to join the Army, and share in the Victory. † At other Times they had been noisy and clamorous enough, but now they proceeded so far as to threaten to burn his House over his Head. *Jephthab* endeavour'd what he could, to pacify them with good Words; but, when he found that Reasoning would not do, he fell upon them with his Army, and put them to Flight: And, being resolv'd to hinder them from giving him the like Molestation any more, he sent, and secur'd all the Passes over *Jordan* in their Way home; so that, as fast as they came thither, if upon Examination they own'd themselves

From Judges
i. to the End
of Ruth.

And suppresses
the Insurrec-
tion of the E-
phraimites.

8 C

Ephraimites,

† We read no where else of this Country, which, very probably, was not far from *Gilead*, upon the Borders of the *Ammonites*, in the Entrance of *Arabia Deserta*; or perhaps it is the same with what is called *Ish-tob* (2 Sam. viii. 6, 8.) which was in *Syria*, and so near the *Ammonites*, that they hir'd Forces from thence, as well as from other Nations, to fight against *David*. *Patrick's Commentary*.

* To make a Vow, was an Act of religious Worship, and in itself no way culpable; nay, not only the *Jews*, but other Nations look'd upon it in this View: And therefore we find *Livy* so frequently telling us, that the *Roman Generals* were wont to vow to *Jupiter*, or *Apollo*, or some other God, that if, by their Help, they should prove successful, they would devote some Part of the Spoil, they should take in the War, to their Use, or build Temples and dedicate them to their Honour. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† 'Tho' *Gideon* had called the *Ephraimites* to assist in the Pursuit of the *Midianites*, and had given them the Advantage of Plunder, and the Honour of taking *Oreb* and *Zeb*, two Princes of *Midian*, Prisoners; yet, because they were not called at first to the Battle, they took upon them to reprehend him very sharply, which he, like a prudent Man, took patiently, and pacify'd them with good Words. *Howell's History*, Lib. iv. in the Notes.

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Ephraimites, they were immediately put to the Sword; if they deny'd it, they had † the Test-Word SHIBBOLETH given them, which (if they pronounc'd it *SIBBOLETH*) discover'd their Country; and cost them their Lives; insomuch, that what in the Field, and what on the Banks of the River, no less than † two and forty thousand *Ephraimites* were slain.

Thus *Jephthah*, having deliver'd his Country from the Attempts both of foreign and domestick Foes, liv'd the Remainder of his Days in Peace, and, after the Administration of publick Affairs for six Years Continuance in all, he died, and was honourably bury'd in his own Country.

He was succeeded by *Ibzan* of *Bethlehem*, who, after he had govern'd seven Years, was succeeded by *Elon*, of the Tribe of *Zebulun*; and he, after he had rul'd ten Years, by *Abdon*, of the Tribe of *Ephraim*, who rul'd eight. Of these *Judges* the sacred History says nothing

remarkable, only that some of them had a numerous Issue, which is mention'd to shew that the Government, at that Time, was not *Hereditary*.

DURING the Administration of these *Judges*, the *Israelites* enjoy'd a Peace of three and twenty Years Continuance; but when they relaps'd into their old Impieties, God suffer'd the *Philistines* to invade and oppress them, whereupon, *Samson's* valiant Acts began to display themselves. He was the Son of *Manoah*, † of the Tribe of *Dan*, and of a Mother, whose Name we no where find in Scripture. This Woman was a long Time barren; and had no Children; and therefore when an Angel appear'd to her, while she was alone, and gave her Assurances, that she would be Mother of a Son, who was to be † a *Nazarite* from his Birth; to drink no Wine or strong Liquor; and † never have his Hair shav'd; upon her telling her Husband these glad Tidings, he requested of God to vouchsafe him a Sight of the same

From Judges i. to the End of Ruth.

Samson's Parentage, Birth, and juvenile Exploits,

† Nothing is more notorious, than that the People of the same Nation, who speak the same Language, differ very much in their Pronunciation of it, in several Parts of the Country. In *Palestine*, the People in *Galilee*, and those that liv'd at *Jerusalem*, spake the same Tongue, and yet, in the Time of *Christ*, the latter could tell *St Peter*, that his Speech bewray'd him, *Matth. xxvi. 73.* In *Greece* all spake *Greek*, and yet the *Ionians*, *Atticks*, *Dorians*, and *Aeolians* pronounc'd very differently. And here, tho' the *Gileadites* and *Ephraimites* were all of one Nation, yet the latter, we find, could not pronounce the Letter *Schin*. There were doubtless therefore many other Words, which they could not frame their Mouths to speak, as the *Gileadites* did, but this one was chosen, because it was fit for their Purpose. For, as *Shibboleth* signifies *Floods of Water*, the *Gileadites*, when they saw any *Ephraimite* appear, might put this Test to him, and bid him say, *Let me pass over the Water.* *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

† This was a terrible Slaughter, for one Tribe to make of another; but the *Ephraimites* seem to have deserv'd it, as a just Punishment of their Pride and Insolence; in despising so great a Man as *Jephthah*, who had sav'd all the People of *Israel*, and threatening to destroy his House, after so glorious a Victory; in reviling their Brethren like-wife; invading them without a Cause, and attempting to drive them out of their Country. *Patrick's* Commentary.

† As the Tribe of *Dan* lay bordering upon the *Philistines*, it was most expos'd to their Incursions and Invasions; and therefore God, out of that Tribe, chose *Samson*, to be a Scourge to them, and a Revenger of his People, which is very agreeable to the Prophecy of *Jacob*, when he blessed his Sons, a little before his Death. *Dan shall be a Serpent by the Way, an Adder by the Path, biting the Heels of the Horse, so that his Rider shall fall backward, Gen. xlix. 17.*

† A *Nazarite* was one, who, under the *Lewitical* Law, either to attain the Favour, or avert the Judgments, or acknowledge the Mercies of Almighty God, vowed a Vow of particular Purity, and separated himself (for so the Word signifies) in an extraordinary Manner, to the Service of God. The Time of this Vow lasted usually for eight Days, sometimes for a Month, and, in some Cases, for the Person's whole Life. During this Time, the Persons (for Women, as well as Men, might enter into this Engagement) bound themselves to abstain from Wine, and all strong Liquors; not to cut the Hair of their Heads; not to come near a dead Corps, nor assist at a Funeral: Nay, the Matter was carry'd so high, that if any happen'd to die suddenly in their Presence, the whole Ceremony of this Separation was to begin a-new. After the Time that their Separation was ended, they were to offer such Sacrifices, as the Law appointed, and then, being absolv'd from their Vow by the Priest, they might drink Wine, and use the same Freedom, that other People did. *Samson's Nazaritism* (to which he was consecrated by his Parents) was to last the whole Term of his Life; but his frequent Intercourse with the *Philistines*, and the great Havock and Slaughter, that he so often made among them, would induce one to think, that he had a particular Dispensation exempting him from the Observation of some of the foregoing Rules. Vid. *Numb. vi. Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries upon it, and *Calmet's* Dictionary under the Word.

† Long Hair was esteem'd very much among the *Yeros*; and such Persons as were made *Nazarites* by their Parents, and consecrated to God from the Womb, were requir'd to wear their Hair long and uncut, because it was a Token not only of Beauty, but of Majesty and Veneration. *Howell's* History, in the Notes.

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same heavenly *Messenger*, which accordingly God granted him, and, when *Manoah* intreated the Angel to accept of a small Entertainment, which he chose rather to have converted into a Sacrifice, *Manoah* made ready a Kid, and Wine for Libations; and, having plac'd them upon an Altar made of Stone, as the Smoak of the Sacrifice began to ascend, the † Angel mounted up in the Flame, and so disappear'd.

AT the Time appointed the divine Promise was accomplish'd, and the Woman was deliver'd of a Son, whom she nam'd *Samson*. While he was yet a Youth, the Spirit of God began to appear in him, and to exert itself in some notable Exploits and Feats of Activity, in what was called † the old Camp of *Dan*, (lying between † *Zorah* and *Eshtaol*) the Place where he was born. When he came to Man's Estate, he fell in Love with the Daughter of a *Philistine*, who liv'd at *Tinnah*; and tho' his Parents did not so well approve of the Match, because she was sprung from

an idolatrous Family, yet, such was their Tenderness for their Son, that they indulg'd his Passion, and went both of them with him to † *Tinnah* to treat about the Marriage. As they were on their Journey, and *Samson* was straggling a little from the Company, all on a sudden a young Lion came running at him with open Mouth, but he took it, and slew it with as much Ease, as if it had been a Kid; and, some Time after, as he pass'd that Way, (which was when his Father and Mother went with him to solemnize his Nuptials) he turn'd aside to see what was become of the Lion's Carcase, and, to his great Surprise, found a † Swarm of Bees, and some Honey in it, which he took, and gave Part of it to his Parents, but did not tell them from whence he had it.

It was customary in those Days to continue the *nuptial* Entertainment for seven Days, and, to do the Bridegroom greater Honour, his Wife's Relations had brought † thirty of their prime Youth to bear him Company, to whom (as the Manner then was)

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i. to the End
of Ruth.

His Marriage,
slaying the Philistines, and
burning their
Corn with
Foxes.

† Angels Bodies, which the *Platonists* called *ὀχήματα*, or *Vehicles*, are not subject to the Laws of Gravity, as ours are. After our Saviour's Resurrection, the History of the Gospel informs us, how immediately, and in an Instant, his Body could move from Place to Place; and therefore it is no Wonder, that *Manoah* and his Wife should discover the Person, that appear'd to them to be an Angel by the Manner of his Ascension. *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† This Camp of *Dan* was probably that Place, where the *Danites* made their Encampment, in their Expedition and Enterprize against *Laiſh*, Judg. xviii. 11. for it is not at all likely that the *Philistines*, who had the *Israelites*, at that Time, entirely under their Subjection, should suffer them to have any standing Camp. And this, by the By, is a good Argument, that the Story of *Micah*, and of the *Danites* Expedition, was transacted before *Samson's* Time, though the Compilers of the *Bible* have plac'd it after. *Howell's History*, in the Notes.

† Both these were Towns in the Tribe of *Dan*, whereof *Zorah* lay on the Frontiers of *Judah*; and for this Reason *Rehoboam*, upon the Revolt of the Ten Tribes, seems to have kept this Place, tho' lying in one of these Tribes, and to have fortify'd it, for a Barrier-Town, on that Side of the Kingdom of *Judah*; as he did also *Aijalon*, another Town belonging to the same Tribe. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. II. Chap. vi.

† It is not improbably thought, that the Place which is called *Tinnah*, Josh. xv. 10. and *Tinnatba*, Josh. xix. 43. was the same with this. It was assign'd at first to the Tribe of *Judah*, but afterwards to the Tribe of *Dan*, and was, in all Likelihood, the Place whither *Judah*, the Patriarch of the Tribe, that was called after him, went up to his Sheep-shearers, Gen. xxxviii. 12. *Wells's Geography*, *ibid*.

† Bees are observ'd by *Aristotle* and others to abhor stinking Smells, and to abstain from Flesh; which has made some think it strange, that a Swarm of Bees should be found in the Carcase of a Lion: But it is no hard Matter to suppose, that either Time had consum'd, or Birds and Beasts devour'd all the Flesh, so that nothing was left of the Lion but the *Skeleton*, in which the Bees did not breed (for the Notion of Insects breeding in that Manner is now quite exploded) but only settled themselves, when they swarm'd, as they have sometimes done in dead Men's Sculls, and in their Tombs. *Bochart's Hieroz.* Part II. lib. iv. c. 10. and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† During the Time of the *Marriage-feast*, which, for a Virgin, lasted seven, but for a Widow, only three Days, it was customary among the *Jews*, to have a chosen Set of young Men, whom the *Greeks* called *Paranymphs*, and the *Hebrew* *Scheliachim*, to keep the *Bridegroom* Company; as also a certain Number of young Women were about the *Bride* all this Time. These young Men were generally of the *Bridegroom's* Relations and Acquaintance; but, at *Samson's* Marriage, they belong'd to his Wife's Family, (and were sent, as some of the *Jews* think) not so much to do him Honour at the Time of his *Nuptials*, as to be a *Guard* over him, lest he should make any Disturbance, of which the *Philistines* were afraid, when they understood that he was a Man of so much Strength and Might. *Lamy's Introduction*, Lib. i. Cap. 14. and *Cabnet's Dissert.* sur les Mariages des Heb.

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was) he propounded a *Riddle* †, which if they could explain in the Time, that the Feast lasted, he oblig'd himself to give them thirty Suits of Clothes, and an equal Number of Shirts; but if they could not, they were to forfeit the like to him. The Words of the Riddle were, *Out of the Eater came forth Meat, and out of the Strong came forth Sweetness*; which so puzzled the young Men, that they could not, for their Hearts, devise what it meant, and therefore applying themselves to *Samson's* Wife, what with Threats, and what with Intreaties, they prevail'd with her to get the Secret out of her Husband: Which when, with much Importunity, she had done, she told it them, and they, at the Conclusion of the Feast, gave him to understand that they knew it. He told them however by whose Information they had it, and, being desperately enrag'd went down to † *Askalon*, a City of the *Philistines*, where having slain † thirty Men, he gave their Clothes to those that had expounded the Riddle; but, taking the Thing very ill of his Wife, he left her, and went down to his Father's House, while she, in his Absence, was marry'd to

one of the young Men, that had been his Companions all the Wedding-Week. From Judges i. to the End of Ruth.

As soon as his Resentment was abated, and his Anger appeas'd, *Samson* took a Kid for a Present to his Wife, and went to her Father's House, with a full Purpose of being reconcil'd to her; but, to his great Amazement, was deny'd Admittance to her Room, and told by her Father, that, upon Presumption he had quite forsaken her, he had marry'd her to one of his Companions, but had another Daughter younger, and more beautiful, that was at his Service. This Answer was far from satisfying him; and therefore, imagining that the Affront was not so much the Act of his Father-in-law, as the general Contrivance of the *Philistines*, he turn'd about short, and vow'd Revenge, which he afterwards executed in the following Manner.

By some Means or other, he got together a Multitude of *Foxes*, to the Number of three hundred; and, tying them two and two together by the Tails, with a lighted Torch between each Pair, he turn'd them into the standing Corn at different Places, and so not only set the Fields on Fire,

† This Riddle, which *Samson* propos'd at his Nuptials, is somewhat singular. As the Men and Women were not permitted to be together in these *Eastern* Countries, they could not amuse themselves with their Conversation; and as they could not spend their Time merely in dull eating and drinking, it is hence presum'd that their Custom was, in their Computations and Feasts, (as we find it afterwards among the *Greeks*) to propose Questions, and hard Problems to be resolv'd, in order to exercise the Wit and Sagacity of the Company. *Selden de Uxore Hebr. lib. ii. c. 16.* But as to this Riddle of *Samson's*, some People are apt to find Exceptions. The Opposition, they say, is manifest in the former Part of it, but not in the latter; for *Weakness* is oppos'd to *Strength*, not *Sweetness*, whose Opposite is *Bitterness*, or *Sharpness*. But *Bochart* has ingeniously observ'd, that these two Words, *strong* and *sharp*, are oftentimes us'd promiscuously. For, in the *Arabick* Language, the Word *Mirra*, which signifies *Strength*, comes from *Marra*, which signifies to be *sharp* or *bitter*; and so it is in the *Latin*, where *Acer*, a *sharp* Man, is as much as a valiant Man, one who eagerly (as we speak) engages his Enemy, and (what is more) we find in some of the best Authors, this particular Epithet apply'd to Lions ——— *Genus acre Leonum*, *Ovid. Fast.* And therefore the *Antithesis* of the Words, is this, ——— *Food came from the Devourer, and Sweetness from what is eager or sharp*, i. e. violent and fierce. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

† It is a City in the Land of the *Philistines* situated between *Azoth* and *Gaza*, upon the Coast of the *Mediterranean-Sea*, about five hundred and twenty Furlongs distant from *Jerusalem*. It is said to have been of great Note among the *Gentiles*, for a Temple dedicated to *Direto*, the Mother of *Semiramis*, here worshipp'd in the Form of a *Mermaid*; and for another Temple of *Apollo*, where *Herod*, the Father of *Antipater*, and Grandfather of *Herod the Great*, serv'd as Priest. The Place subsists to this Day, but is now very inconsiderable. Some Mention there is made of the Wine of *Askalon*, and the Cypress-Tree, (a Shrub that was antiently in great Esteem, and very common in this Place) but modern Travellers say no such Thing of it now. *Calmet's* Dictionary under the Word, and *Wells's* Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. III.

† It may well be question'd, upon what Occasion *Samson* could meet with thirty *Philistines*, all cloth'd in their new and best Attire, even though we allow that he went with a Disposition to pick a Quarrel with them, and slay them; but then it is but supposing, that, at this Time, there was a Merry-making, either in the Fields, or in the City, at some publick Solemnity, when great Companies us'd to be gather'd together, and appear in their best Apparel, and the Thing is done. *Patrick's* Commentary.

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Fire, but the Vine and Olive Yards like-
wise, insomuch that the whole Country
was in a Blaze. When the *Philistines*
understood that it was *Samson*, who had
done this, in Revenge to the Affront,
which his Father-in-law had put upon him,
they came in a Body, and fir'd the House
over his Father's Head, and so burnt him
and *Samson's* Wife together. This was a
fresh Provocation, for which *Samson*
threaten'd to be reveng'd; and, thereupon,
without any Ceremony, fell immediately
upon them, and || slew a great Number of
them.

SAMSON, being conscious to him-
self, that he must have highly provok'd
the *Philistines* by this last Slaughter of
them, took up his Residence thence for-
wards on the † Top of the Rock *Etam*,
which was in the Tribe of *Judah*. Here-
upon the *Philistines* came down with an
armed Force, and demanded *Samson* to be
deliver'd up to them. The People of
Judah, fearing the Consequence of this
Invasion, detach'd a Body of three Thou-
sand Men to *Samson*; who, after they had
expostulated the Injury he had done them
in provoking their Enemies so highly, told
him in plain Terms, that they were come
to seize, and deliver him up to the *Philistines*.

SAMSON submitted to have him-
self bound (which was done with new
strong Cords) upon Condition, that they
themselves would not side with the Enemy
against him; and so being brought to the
Place, where the *Philistines* were encamp'd,
they now thought they had him secure,
and therefore ran out with Joy to receive
him. But as they came near him, he
snapp'd the Cords asunder, and, happen-
ing to espy a fresh Jaw-Bone of an Ass,
he made Use of that for Want of a better
Weapon, and therewith slew no less than
a Thousand Men; from which Atchieve-
ment, the Place was afterwards called,
either simply *Lehi*, i. e. the *Jaw-Bone*,
or *Ramah-Lehi*, the *Lifting up of the Jaw-
Bone*. Fatigu'd with this Fight, and
being now excessive thirsty in a Place,
where no Water was to be had, he made
his Supplications to God, and God imme-
diately caus'd a Fountain of delicious Wa-
ter to issue from an hollow Rock, adja-
cent to *Lehi*, wherewith *Samson* allay'd
his Thirst, and was reviv'd; and from
this Event the Place was call'd *En-bak-
kor*, the *Well of him that pray'd*, ever
after.

AFTER this Action *Samson* made no-
thing of the *Philistines*, but went openly
into † one of their Cities call'd *Gaza*,
and

From Judges
i. to the End
of Ruth.
His Killing a
1000 with a
Jaw-Bone.

Carrying away
the Gates of
Gaza.

|| The Words in the Text, according to our Translation, are, *And he smote them Hip and Thigh with a great Slaughter*; Judg. xv. 8. But the Words in the Original will admit of this Signification, *He smote them with his Leg on their Thigh, and gave them great Hurts or Wounds*; and, to justify this Sense, a learned Commentator supposes, that there was at this Time, somewhere among the *Philistines*, Wrestling-Matches, and other rural Exercises, to which every one was invited, and that *Samson* among the rest, might go thither; that there he threw great Numbers of the *Philistines*, who perhaps might value themselves upon their Activity that Way; and, in the Midst of the Grapple with them, broke their Thighs with a Kick or Twist of his Leg. If this Supposition be right, the Phrase *Crus Femori impingere* seems to be much the same with what the *Greeks* call *σκαλίζαν*, or *ἀποσκαλίζαν*; for, though this Kind of Exercise grew into high Esteem among the *Grecians*, who were so famous for their Gymnick Sports; yet, that Wrestling was an Exercise not unknown among the People of the *East* is manifest from Gen. xxv. 26. xxx. 8. and xxxii. 24. This our Commentator offers but as a Conjecture indeed; but it seems much more feasible, than the Interpretation either of the *Vulgate*, or *Chaldee Paraphrast*. *Le Clerc* in Locum.

† This was a strong Place in the Tribe of *Judah*, (as *Josephus* relates) to the Top of which no more than one Man could come a-breast, and therefore easily defensible: By all this however, and what follows in this History of *Samson*, it is plain, that he had no Commission from God, nor was mov'd by any extraordinary Impulse to make open War (as did *Gideon*, *Jephthah*, and others) for the Deliverance of *Israel* from the Yoke of the *Philistines*, but only to weaken them and keep them in Awe, that, out of Dread of him, they might be less cruel in their Oppression; and that this was all that God intended to do by him, is pretty plain from the Words of the Angel, Judg. xiii. 5. *He shall begin to deliver Israel*. *Patrick's* Commentary.

† This City was, by *Joshua*, made Part of the Tribe of *Judah*, but, after him, it fell into the Hands of the *Philistines*, and was one of their five Principalities, situated between *Raphia* and *Askelon*, towards the southern Extremity of the promis'd Land. The advantageous Situation of this Place was the Cause of the many Revolutions, to which it became subject. At first of all it belong'd to the *Philistines*, but, in *Joshua's* Time, was conquer'd by the *Hebrews*. In the Reigns of *Jotham* and *Ahaz*, it recover'd its Liberty, but was conquer'd by *Hezekiah*. It was made subject to

the

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and took up his Lodging in a publick House of Entertainment. The Governor of the Place had soon Intelligence of him, and sent Guards to beset the House, and to watch the Gates of the City for his going out next Morning; but *Samson*, being inform'd of this, rose in the Midnight, and taking the two Gates of the City, Gate-Posts, Bars, Bolts, Chain and all, he laid them on his Shoulders, and carry'd them to the Top of an Hill, † that looks towards *Hebron*, and there left them.

Falling in Love with *Dalilah*, by whom he is betray'd, and deliver'd to the Philistines.

AT length a more fatal *Adventure*, than any of these, befel him: For, falling in Love with a beautiful Woman nam'd † *Dalilah*, who liv'd in the Vale of *Sorek*, which lay in the Tribe of *Judah*, he was

so infatuated to her, that he lost all Regard to his own Safety. The Princes of the *Philistines*, observing his Passion for this Woman, came and promis'd her † a round Sum of Money, if she would learn of him, and discover to them, what might be the Cause of this his wonderful Strength, and † how he might be depriv'd of it. This she undertook to do; and fail'd not to employ all her Art and Sollicitation, to get the important Secret from him. For some Time he amus'd her with Fictions, and made her believe, that his Strength consisted sometimes in one Thing, and sometimes in another; first, that binding him with Bands made of green Withs, then, that tying him with Ropes that had never been us'd, and again, † weaving his

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the *Chaldeans*, when they reduc'd *Syria* and *Phœnicia*; and afterwards fell into the Hands of the *Persians*. They were Masters of it, when *Alexander* besieg'd, took, and demolish'd it. It afterwards rose again (but not near of the same Magnitude) under the Name of *Majuma*, which underwent as many Vicissitudes as the former. The Kings of *Egypt* had it for some Time in Possession; *Antiochus the Great* took and sack'd it; the *Asmoneans*, or *Maccabees*, took it several Times from the *Syrians*; *Alexander Jannæus*, King of the *Hebrews*, destroy'd it; *Gabinus* repair'd it; *Augustus* gave it to *Herod the Great*; *Constantine* gave it the Name of *Constantia*, with many independent Privileges, in Honour of his Son; but the Emperor *Julian* destroy'd, and depriv'd it of all. *Calmet's Dictionary*.

† The Words in the Text are, that he carried them up to the Top of a Hill, that is before *Hebron*, Judg. xvi. 3. but the Word, which we render *before*, does equally signify in the Sight of *Hebron*; and therefore, since the Distance between *Gaza* and *Hebron* is no less than twenty Miles, it is more probable, that the Hill, where *Samson* left these Gates, lay between the two Cities, and in View of both, that the Inhabitants of one City might behold them to their Confusion, and they of the other to their Encouragement to hope for a future Deliverance. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† It is certain, that *Sorek* was a Place in the Land of *Judæa*, famous for choice Wines, as may be gather'd from Gen. xlv. 11. *Isaiah* v. 12. and Jer. ii. 21. and lay not above a Mile and a half from *Escol*, from whence the Spies brought a Bunch of Grapes for a Sample of the Fruitfulness of the Country; but whether *Dalilah*, who is said to live here, was a Woman of *Israel*, or one of the Daughters of the *Philistines*, (who at this Time were Rulers in the Country of *Judah*) or whether she was his Wife, or an Harlot only, is not express'd in her Story. *St Chrysostom* and others are of Opinion, that he was marry'd to her; but if so, some Mention, one would think, there should have been of the Marriage-Ceremonies in this, as well as in his former Wife's Case: Nor can we think, that the *Philistines* would have been so bold, as to attempt to draw her into their Party, and to bribe her to betray him into their Hands, had she been his lawful Wife. It appears indeed, by her whole Behaviour that she was a mercenary Woman, who would do any Thing to get Money, and accordingly *Josephus* (*Antiq. lib. v. c. 1.*) calls her a common Prostitute of the *Philistines*. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

† The Princes of the *Philistines*, from their five chief Cities, *Accarod*, *Ascalon*, *Gaza*, *Azoth*, and *Gath*, 1 Sam. vi. 17. are suppos'd to be five in Number, so that, if they made her a common Purse, (as we say) of five Times eleven hundred Pieces, or five thousand five hundred Shekels of Silver, it would amount to about three hundred and forty three Pounds fifteen Shillings. *Howell's History*, in the Notes.

† There is a good deal of Probability in *Josephus's* Manner of telling this Story, viz. That while they were eating and drinking together, and he was caressing her, she fell into an Admiration of his wonderful Deeds; and, having highly extolled them, desir'd him to tell her, how he came so much to excel all other Men in Strength. For we cannot suppose, that she came bluntly upon him all at once, and desir'd to know, (as it is in the Text) *wherewith he might be bound and afflicted*. This had been discovering her wicked Design against him at once, and defeating herself of an Opportunity of betraying him; and therefore we must conclude, that the Sacred History in this Place (as it frequently does elsewhere) gives us only the Sum and Substance of what *Dalilah* said to her *Paramour*, without taking notice of all the cunning and artful Speeches, wherewith she dress'd it up. *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† We have follow'd in this Passage (which indeed is a very obscure one) the Notion of the learned *Spencer*, (de Leg. Mosæ Rit. lib. iii. c. 6. Dissert. 1.) concerning the Hair of the *Nazarite*; but a learned Commentator is of another Opinion, viz. that *Samson's* Hair, being very long, was interwoven with the Threads and Warp of a Web of Cloth. And to this Purpose he supposes, that in the Room where he sometimes slept upon a Couch, there might stand very near a Loom, wherewith *Dalilah*, (as the Custom then was) at her leisure Hours, might work and divert herself,

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his Hair into *Tresses*, and so *filleting* them up, would bereave him of his Strength:

But these were no more than *mock Stories*; for, upon Trial, she found that all this signify'd nothing; and therefore, betaking herself to all her Arts and Wiles, she complain'd of his Falseness, and upbraided him with his Want of Love, since he with-held a Thing from her, which she was so impatient to know: And thus, by daily *teazing* and importuning him, she prevail'd with him at length to tell her the Secret, *viz.* that, *in the Preservation of his Hair (for he was a Nazarite from his Birth) his Strength and Security lay.*

THERE was something in his Manner of telling her this, that made *Dalilah* believe she had now got the true Secret from him; and therefore she sent Word thereof to some of the Chief of the *Philistines*, who came and paid her the Money they had covenanted to give her: And,

when she had cut off his Hair, as he lay sleeping in her Lap, they fell upon him, bound him, and put out his Eyes; and, having carry'd him to *Gaza*, they shut him up in Prison, and made him † grind in the *Mill*, like a Slave.

IN Process of Time however, his Hair grew again, and with it his former Strength return'd: So that, when several of the Princes and Nobility of the *Philistines* were met in a general Assembly, to return Thanks to their God † *Dagon*, for having deliver'd their worst and forest Enemy into their Hands; and after they had feasted a while, and were now grown merry, they order'd that this same *Samson* should be sent for, that they might have Pleasure in ridiculing his Misery, and making Sport with his Blindness, and accordingly *Samson* was brought. A large Number of People was upon this Occasion met together; and the Building, where the Feast was celebrated, had only two

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herself, and that now, by his Permission and Connivance, she might take the Locks of his Hair, work it into the Web, and, to hinder it from being pulled out, secure it with an Iron Pin thrust into the Beam, but that *Samson*, when he awoke, took the Loom along with him at his Hair. And indeed, without some such Suspicion as this, we cannot very well tell what to make of his going away with *the Pin of the Beam, and with the Web*, Judg. xvi. 14. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† Before the Invention of *Wind* and *Water-Mills*, Men made use of *Hand-Mills*, wherewith to grind their Corn; and, as this was a very laborious Work, we find Masters (especially in most *Comick* Authors) threaten'd their Servants with it, in case of any Delinquency. It was the Work indeed of *Malefactors*, as well as Slaves; and therefore it seems very probable, that, in this Prison, where *Samson* was put, there was a publick Mill, as *Socrates* (Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. 18.) tells us there were several afterwards in *Rome*, in the Time of *Theodosius*. So that from this, and some other Circumstances, we may learn, that the *Philistines* Purpose was, not to put *Samson* to Death, (even as they had promis'd *Dalilah* they would not) but to punish him in a Manner (*viz.* with Blindness, hard Labour, and Insults) much worse, and more intolerable, than Death itself. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† The Word *Dagon*, is taken from the *Phœnician* Root *Dag*, which signifies a Fish; and accordingly the Idol is usually represented (as the *Heathens* do *Tritons* and *Syrens*) in the Shape of a Woman, with the lower Parts of a Fish — *desinit in Piscem mulier formosa superne.* — For this Reason learned Men have imagin'd, that *Dagon*, was the same with *Derceto*, which the People of *Askelon* worshipp'd, and near which Place there was a great Pond full of Fish, consecrated to this Goddess, from which the Inhabitants superstitiously abstain'd, out of a fond Belief that *Venus*, having heretofore cast herself into this Pond, was *metamorphos'd* into a Fish. The learned *Jurieu* is of another Opinion, *viz.* That *Dagon*, whose Termination is Masculine, both in sacred and profane Writings, is always represented as a Male Deity, and may therefore very properly be thought to be the *Neptune* of the Ancients. The *Phœnicians* in particular (from whom both the *Greeks* and *Romans* borrow'd their Gods) living upon the Sea-Coast, and by their Navigation and Commerce, gaining great Advantages from that Element, can hardly be suppos'd to want a Deity to preside over it. *Saturn*, and his three Sons, *Jupiter*, *Neptune*, and *Pluto*, were their principal Idols: And, as *Saturn* was their *Moloch*, *Jupiter* their *Baal*, and *Pluto* their *Baal-Zebub*; so have we Reason to presume, that *Neptune* was their *Dagon*. This however, will not hinder us from supposing, that there might be two Deities, a Male, and a Female, worshipp'd in the same Country, and under the same Figure or Form; and that, as the *Pagan* Theology gives *Jupiter* a *Juno*, to be his Consort in Heaven; and *Pluto*, a *Proserpine* to keep him Company in Hell; so *Neptune* had his *Amphitrite* to be the Partner of his liquid Empire in the Sea. According to this Supposition, the *Dagon* of *Gaza* or *Askelon* must be *Neptune*, and the *Derceto* of *Askelon*, a few Leagues distant, *Amphitrite*, the Daughter of *Doris* and *Oceanus*. Nor can it be thought incongruous to suppose farther, that the Universal God of the Sea might, in one Place, be represented as a Male (as at *Askelon*); and, in another (as at *Askelon*) as a Female, to signify the Fecundity of that Element, which produces, and nourishes so many living Creatures. *Le Clerc's Commentary, Calmet's Dictionary, and Jurieu, Histoire des Dogmes & Cultes, Par. IV. Chap. vi.*

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two large Pillars to support the Roof. After the *Philistines* therefore had insulted *Samson*, as long as they thought fit, he desir'd the Boy, that led him, to guide him to one of those Pillars, that he might rest himself a little against it. The Boy did so: And *Samson* by this Means having laid hold of the two main Supporters, the one with his right Hand, and the other with his Left, after a short *Ejaculation* to God for the *Restoration* of his former Strength,

he gave them such a terrible Shake, that down came the House, and crush'd no less than three Thousand Persons to Death under its Ruins, and *Samson* among the rest.

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† Thus died this *Hero*, in the Midst of his Enemies, as he desir'd; and when his Relations heard of his Death, they sent, and † took away his Body, and bury'd it honourably in the Sepulchre of his Fathers.

The OBJECTION.

“ J U D G E S, according to the Notion
“ that one would have of them, should
“ be Men of great Gravity and Sedateness;
“ not only regular and religious themselves,
“ but zealous Promoters of Virtue, and
“ severe Avengers of all Wickedness and
“ Impiety; well skill'd in the Knowledge
“ of the Laws of God, and impartial in
“ the Administration of Justice: But,
“ instead of this, what do we meet with
“ in this History of their Lives, but Cru-
“ elty and Perfidiousness, a profane Neg-
“ lect of the Service of God, Encourage-
“ ment given to Vice by their own Ex-
“ amples, and such *Romantick* Accounts
“ of some of their Actions and Adventures,
“ as no human Faith can swallow?

“ F O R what can we think of *Ehud's*
“ *left-handed Doings*, in assassinating *Eg-*

lon, King of the *Moabites*, under the
“ wicked Pretence of having a Message to
“ deliver to him from God? And yet, it
“ must be own'd, that this was not near
“ so base as *Jael's* inviting *Sisera* (who
“ was then at Peace with her and her
“ Husband) into her Tent, and, in Cir-
“ cumstances that would have mov'd
“ another's Compassion, knocking him
“ on the Head, for which she merited to
“ have her Name recorded in a *triumphant*
“ Song.

“ T H E Faith of several of these Wor-
“ thies is highly commended (e) by the
“ Author to the *Hebrews*; and yet we
“ find *Barak* refusing to obey the divine
“ Summons, unless *Deborah* would pro-
“ mise to go along with him; and *Gideon*
“ requesting Miracle upon Miracle for
“ the

† It is made a Question among *Casuits* and *Divines*, whether *Samson* ought to have died in this Manner, with a Spirit of Revenge, and Self-murder? St *Austin* excuses him indeed, but it is upon the Supposition that he was urg'd thereunto by the inward Motions of him, who is the great Arbitrator of our Life and Death; and St *Bernard* affirms, that, if he had not a peculiar Inspiration of the Holy Ghost to move him to this, he could not, without Sin, have been the Author of his own Death; but others maintain, that, without having Recourse to this *supernatural* Motive, this Action of his might be vindicated from his Office, as being the Judge and Defender of *Israel*, and that he might therefore devote his Life to the Publick Good (as some *Heathens* have merited the Commendation of Posterity by so doing) without having any Thing in View, but the Death of his Enemies, and the Deliverance of his own People. *Calmet's* Dictionary, and *Saurin's* Dissert. sur divers Exploits de *Samson*.

† How the People of *Gaza* came to permit *Samson's* Relations to come and take away his Body is not so obvious to conceive. In all Nations there was formerly so much Humanity, as not to prohibit Enemies from interring their Dead, nor did any of the *Israelites* join with *Samson* in his Enterprizes; he stood alone in what he did: But this last Slaughter which he had made among them, might have provok'd them, one would think, to some Acts of Outrage even upon his dead Body. It is to be observ'd however, that instead of any Acts of Violence, they might perhaps be much humbled and mollify'd by this late Disaster; and might fear, that if they deny'd him Burial, the God of *Israel*, who had given him such extraordinary Strength in his Life-Time, would not fail to take Vengeance of them. And therefore, dreading his very Corps, they were desirous to get quit of it (even as they were of the *Ark* afterwards) and glad that any came to take such a formidable Object out of their Sight. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

(e) Heb. xi.

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“ the Confirmation of his Faith, tho’ he
“ had *Demonstration* enough that the
“ Messenger came from God.

“ No Man had certainly experienc’d
“ more signal Interpositions of God’s
“ Goodness in his Favour, than this *Ge-*
“ *neral* had done; and yet, how badly
“ did he requite his gracious Protector,
“ in making an *Ephod*, to be an Instru-
“ ment of Idolatry, and a Means, in Af-
“ ter-Ages, to alienate the Hearts of the
“ People? And how implacable was his
“ Revenge, in crushing the Princes of
“ *Succoth* under Thorns, and putting the
“ Inhabitants of *Penuel* all to Death, mere-
“ ly for denying him some Provisions,
“ which, after all, he had no Right to
“ demand?

“ BUT, of all the Men, that *judged*
“ *Israel*, commend me to *Samson* (and
“ yet he is recorded among the Worthies
“ of old) for a compleat Pattern of Lewd-
“ ness and Immorality, brutal Strength,
“ and brutal Passions. It was a Feat,
“ one would think, great enough (tho’
“ *Josephus* makes no mention of it) for
“ *Shamgar* to kill six hundred of his Foes
“ with an *Ox-Goad* only; but what is
“ this to the *Heaps upon Heaps*, which
“ *Samson* slew with the Jaw-Bone of an
“ *Ass*; and to the Waters which gush’d
“ out at the Socket of one of the Teeth
“ of the same Jaw-Bone so very oppor-
“ tunely to allay his Thirst? A service-
“ able Weapon this, both to destroy his
“ Enemies, and refresh himself!

“ IT may savour of Spite and Malice
“ perhaps, for him to set the Country in
“ a Blaze, and burn down all the poor
“ People’s Corn, merely because his Wife,
“ whom he left first, had play’d the Jilt,
“ and betaken herself to another Man;
“ but it would really raise one’s Won-
“ der, to think, where he could possibly
“ get such Multitudes of *Foxes*, as would
“ do the Work: And tho’ we should al-
“ low, that, after his Hair was grown
“ again, he might have Strength enough
“ to pull down the House, where the

“ *Philistines* were feasting; yet it seems
“ hardly consistent with the Rules of
“ *Architecture*, that a Fabrick, able to
“ contain three thousand People, should
“ have its whole Weight supported by
“ two Pillars only.

“ THE Truth is, *Samson’s* Character
“ at best is but a rough and uncouth one;
“ and some Things are said of his Exploits,
“ that seem to exceed the Bounds of
“ Probability. But, the Wonder of all is,
“ how he comes to be called a *Judge* of
“ *Israel*, who, in all Appearance, was
“ good for nothing else, but to kill the
“ Men, and lie with the Women: And,
“ as easily may we conceive, in what
“ Sense (*f*) *Wine may cheer God*, as how
“ the Spirit of the Lord might come upon
“ him, whose Actions were so *diametrically*
“ opposite to every Motion of that blessed
“ Inmate.

“ IT may well exercise our Wonder
“ again, why none of these Judges (whose
“ Office it was to reform all Abuses) set
“ about the Extirpation of Idolatry. The
“ Princes of *Israel* were certainly in the
“ Right (tho’ *Joshua* in all his Wars never
“ did it) in having Recourse to the Oracle
“ of God; and yet the *Instruments* and
“ Offices of Religion seem to be strangely
“ blended, when the *Levite* in *Micah’s*
“ House pretended to answer the *Da-*
“ *nites* every whit as well by a *Tera-*
“ *phim*, which was no more than a *Pa-*
“ *gan* Idol. And tho’ the other *Levite*,
“ mention’d in this History, might not
“ have sufficient Reason for cutting his
“ dead Wife into Pieces, and sending
“ them about to every Tribe; yet cer-
“ tainly the *Israelites* acted a just Part, in
“ espousing the Quarrel: And therefore
“ we cannot conceive, why God should
“ suffer the *Benjamites*, these bold Con-
“ temners of all Goodness, to be twice
“ successful against them. And when, in
“ Process of Time, the other Tribes had
“ got the better of them, ’tis still another
“ Paradox, how their Minds came to be
“ so chang’d towards them, as to stick

8 E

“ at

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“ at no Means (neither Rapes nor Mur-
“ thers) to recruit their Tribe, and effect
“ their Restauration.

“ WITHOUT entering therefore into
“ the *odd* Story, which is told of *Boaz*
“ and *Ruth*, and by what a shameless
“ Contrivance, the young Widow drew
“ in the old Man to marry her; we may
“ adventure to say, that during this Period,
“ the *Israelites* gave small Proof of their
“ being the *peculiar People* of God; and
“ that the Rulers, whom he is said to
“ have *rais'd up*, were the very reverse of
“ what they should have been, (g) a *Ter-*
“ *ror to good Works*, rather than *Evil*,
“ and Promoters of Wickedness and Ido-
“ latry, rather than *Avengers*, to execute
“ *Wrath upon those*, that were guilty of
“ them.”

Answer'd, by
showing the
Power and
Authority of
these Judges.

JUDGES, which, in *Hebrew*, are
Shophetim, were a Kind of Magistrates, not
much unlike the *Archontes* among the
Athenians, and the *Dictators*, among the
Romans. The *Carthaginians*, a Colony
among the *Tyrians*, had a Sort of Rulers,
whom they called *Suffetes*, or *Shophetim*,
much of the same Extent of Power; and
Grotius, in the Beginning of his Commen-
tary on this Book of *Judges*, compares
them to those *Chiefs*, that were in *Gaul*,
in *Germany*, and *Britain*, before the *Ro-*
mans introduc'd another Form of Govern-
ment. Their *Power* consisted in a *Me-*
*diu*m (as it were) between that of a King
and an ordinary Magistrate, superior to
the latter, but not so absolute as the for-
mer. They were indeed no more than
God's *Vicegerents*, and every Attempt to
raise themselves to *regal* Dignity was
look'd upon as an Usurpation upon his
Right, who alone was to be consider'd as
the *Sovereign* of the *Hebrews*; and there-
fore we find *Gideon* refusing this supreme
Authority, when it was offer'd him; (b)
I will not rule over you, neither shall my
Son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over
you.

THE *Honour* of these Judges lasted for
Life, but their *Succession* was not always

continu'd; for there were frequent Inter-
ruptions in it, and the People liv'd often
under the Dominion of Strangers, without
any Government of their own. According
to common Custom, they were generally
appointed by God. The Gifts which he
invested them with, and the Exploits he
enabled them to do, were a Call sufficient
to that Office: But, in Cases of extreme
Exigence, the People made sometimes
Choice of such, as they thought best qua-
lify'd to rescue them out of their Oppres-
sion, without waiting for any divine De-
signation.

THEIR Right extended so far, as to
arbitrate in all Affairs of War and Peace,
and to determine all Causes; but then
they had none at all to make any new
Laws, or lay any new Taxes upon the
People. Their *Dominion* did seldom reach
over all the Land; but, as it often hap-
pen'd, that the Oppressions, which occa-
sion'd a Recourse to their Assistance, were
felt in particular Tribes, or Provinces only;
so the Judges, which were either rais'd,
or chosen to procure a Deliverance from
these Grievances, did not extend their
Command over all the Land in general,
but over that District only, which they
were appointed to deliver.

IN short, these Judges were by their
Office the Protectors of the Laws, the
Defenders of Religion, and the Avengers
of all Crimes, especially of that of *Idolatry*;
and yet it must be own'd, that these were
Men of the like *Passions* and *Infirmities*
with others, and that the great Advan-
tages, which, under God, they procur'd
for the *Israelites*, did not exempt them
from that Frailty, which is incident to all
human Things.

THE sacred Story indeed tells us, that
(i) the Lord raised up Judges, which de-
livered the *Israelites* out of the Hands of
those, that spoil'd them, and that when he
raised them up he was with them, i. e. he
communicated to them Gifts, both *natural*
and *supernatural*, according to the Exi-
gencies of his People, and, in all their
Encounters

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And their Li-
ableness to be
wicked.

(g) Rom. xiii. 3, 4.

(b) Judg. viii. 23,

(i) Ibid. ii. 16, 18.

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Encounters with their Enemies, attended them with a peculiar Providence: But as well may we infer, that every *General*, who fights the King of *England's* Battles with Success, should be a Man of singular Sanctity, as that those, who were employ'd under God in that Capacity, should lead Lives answerable to their high Character. The Power of working Miracles is not always accompany'd with an holy Life. Many, that shall say unto Christ, (k) *Have not we prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name cast out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful Works*, by Reason of the Iniquity of their Lives shall find no Acceptance with him: What Wonder is it then, to behold some, both Kings and Conquerors, even while they ride in Triumph over the vanquish'd Foes, tamely led captive by their own Passions; so that while we cannot but admire them for their *military* Exploits, we are forc'd to blame and censure them for their private Conduct?

To mention one for all. *Samson*, a Person born for the Castigation of the *Philistines*, and to be a Pattern of Valour to all succeeding *Heroes*, forgot himself in the Arms of a *Dalilah*, and, to the Passion he had for a base perfidious Woman, sacrific'd those Gifts, which God had bestow'd on him for the Deliverance of his *Church*, and so, to all Ages, he became a sad Example of the Corruption and Infirmities of human Nature. The like perhaps, in other Respects, may be said of the rest of the *Judges*: But then we are to remember, that they were Persons under a particular *OEconomy* of Providence; that their Conduct therefore is no Direction to us, tho' their Passions the Almighty might make use of (and therefore tolerate) for the Accomplishment of his wise Ends: *Howbeit they meant not so, neither did their Heart think so*, (l) as the Prophet expresses himself upon the like Occasion.

Ehud's Murder of Eglon.

WHETHER it be lawful, according to the Right of Nature and Nations, for Sub-

jects to rescue themselves from Tyranny by taking away the Life of the Tyrant, and to recover their Country, which has been unjustly taken from them; by destroying the *Usurper*, is a Question, that, has been much debated, and what, at present, we need not enter into, for the Vindication of *Ehud's* Fact. It is the Observation of the learned (m) *Grotius*, that the Authority of the King of *Moab* was never legitimiz'd by any Convention of the *Israelites*, and, consequently, that they were at Liberty to shake off his Yoke, whenever they found a convenient Opportunity. The only Difficulty is, (n) whether a *private* Man might make himself an Instrument in effecting this, in the Manner that *Ehud* did? But to this it is reply'd, that *Ehud* was no *private* Man, but acted by a Warrant and Authority from God: And, to this Purpose, the History acquaints us, that (o) *when Ehud had made an End of offering the Present*, which the *Israelites* sent to *Eglon*, he was upon his Return home, and had gone as far as the *Quarries*, which were by *Gilgal*. The Word *Pesil*, which is here render'd *Quarries*, most commonly signifies (as indeed it is in the Marginal Note, as well as the *Septuagint* and *Vulgate*) *graven Images*, which it is not improbable the *Moabites* had set up in this Place, rather than any other, in pure Contempt of the God of *Israel*, who had for so long a Time made *Gilgal* famous by his Presence in the Tabernacle, while it stood there.

THESE *Images* when *Ehud* beheld, his (p) Spirit was stirred with a just Indignation within him; and therefore, proceeding no farther in his Journey Home, he dismiss'd his Attendants, and went himself back, with a Resolution to revenge this Affront to God, as well as the Oppression of his People.

THAT this his Return was directed by a divine Impulse and Instigation, is evident, I think, from the Hazard of the Enterprize he was going upon, and the many favourable

From Judges
i. to the End
of Ruth.

(k) Matth. vii. 22.

Disfert, sur *Heglon* tué par *Ehud*.

(l) Isa. x. 7.

(o) Judg. iii. 11, &c.

(m) De Jure Belli & Pacis, lib. i. c. 4. §. 19.

(p) Patrick's Commentary.

(n) Saurin's

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.

favourable Occasions that accompany'd the Execution of it. For, how could any Man in his Senses think that a single Person, as he was, should ever be able to compass the Death of a King, amidst the Circle of his Guards and Attendants? How could he expect that an Enemy, as he was, should be admitted to a private Audience? or that, if he should prove so lucky, the King should be so far infatuated, as to order all the Company to quit the Room? The killing the King must have been a great Difficulty under these Circumstances; but then, his making his Escape, had all the Signs of an Impossibility in it: And yet, without his escaping, the Design of delivering his Country must have been abortive. Upon the whole therefore it appears, that nothing, but a divine Instinct, could have given him Courage to set about the Thing; and therefore it was not all Fallacy, when he told *Eglon*, that he had a *Message from God unto him*, because God had sent, and commission'd him to kill him: So that, what he did in this Case, he did not of himself, or from his own mere Motion, but by Virtue of an Order, which he had receiv'd from God, who had destinated this *Oppressor* of his People to this *untimely* Kind of Death.

THIS seems to be the only Way, whereby we can apologize for *Ehud*, in a Fact, which by no Means is to be made a Precedent, and, without a divine Warrant, is in no Case to be justify'd. But, as for the Holy Scriptures, wherein this Action is related *simply*, and without either Dislike or Approbation, why should they suffer in our Esteem upon that Account, any more than *Livy*, *Thucydides*, or any other *Heathen* Author, for recording the various Transactions (and some of them full as base and barbarous as this) that happen'd in the Ages whereof they treat?

IT is a Mistake to think, that every Person, whom the Scripture mentions, nay, whom the Scripture commends in some Respects, should, in all others, be faultless and unblameable; and it would be a much greater Imputation upon the Truth and Authority of these sacred Records, if the *People of God* were all made *Saints*, and no black Actions recorded of them; since it is the receiv'd Character of a good Historian, that, as he should not dare to relate any Thing that is false, so neither should he conceal any Thing that is true.

THERE is something peculiar in relation to the Fact of *Jael*, and that is the Words of the *Prophets*, in her triumphant Song: (q) *Blessed above Women shall Jael, the Wife of Heber, the Kenite, be; blessed shall she be above Women in the Tent*; which some look upon as a Commendation of *Jael*, and consequently, an Approbation of the Murther of *Sisera*: (r) But *Deborah* herein might only prophecy, how, and in what Manner, the *Israelites* would be affected towards that Woman, by whose Means (tho' perhaps not in the most commendable Way) they had been deliver'd from a very dangerous Enemy.

'TIS natural for us, when at any Time we are rescu'd from an Adversary, by whom we have suffer'd much, and have Reason to dread more; 'tis natural, I say, for us to wish well to the Person, by whose Means he was taken off; nor are we apt to consider the Action according to the Measure of strict Virtue, by reason of the Benefit, which accrues to us thereby. *Deborah* might therefore mean no more, than what were the common Notions of Mankind in a Case of this Nature. But, even † admitting her Words to be a Commendation of the Fact, we might, very likely, perceive several Reasons for it,

From Judges
i. to the End
of Ruth.

And Jael's
Murther of
Sisera conf-
der'd.

(q) Judg. v. 24.

(r) *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

† One of our Annotators has another Way of accounting for the Commendation, which is given to *Jael* in *Deborah's* Song, and that is by giving up the Divine Inspiration of it. "It is not to be deny'd, says he, but that there are some Words, Passages, and Discourses recorded in Scripture, which are not divinely inspir'd, because some of them were utter'd by the *Devil*, and others by the holy Men of God, but mistaken: Such is the Discourse of

" *Nathani*

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.

it, if we had but a Knowledge of some Circumstances; which we may reasonably suppose, tho' the Scripture has not related them to us:

It is certain, that the *Kenites* descended from *Hobab*, the Son of *Jethro*, Father-in-law to *Moses*, were (s) at first invited to go with the *Israelites* into the Land of *Canaan*, and were all along kindly treated by them. They indeed had no Share in the Division of the Land, nor were they permitted to dwell in their Cities; yet they had the free Use of their Country, and were allow'd to pitch their Tents (as their Manner of Life was) wherever they thought fit for the Convenience of their Cattle, tho' generally they chose to continue in the Tribe of *Judah*. By this Means a strict Friendship interfer'd, and a firm Alliance was always subsisting between the *Israelites* and these People; whereas, between the *Kenites* and *Jabin*, there was no more than a bare Cessation of Hostilities; and tho' *Heber* and they continu'd *neutral* in this War, yet it was not without wishing well to their ancient Friends, the *Israelites*, among whom they liv'd.

Now it is a receiv'd *Maxim* among all *Civilians*, that where two Compacts stand in Competition, and cannot be both observ'd, the *stronger* should always have the Preference. An Agreement, for Instance, says *Puffendorf* (t), that is made with an Oath, should always supersede that which is made without one. 'Tis but supposing then, that the two depending Treaties were of these different Kinds, and this will be a Circumstance in Favour of *Jael*; but then

if we may suppose farther, that *Jabin* was a grievous Tyrant; and *Sisera* the chief Instrument of his Tyranny; this (u) (according to the Opinion of some) will supply us with a full Apology for what she did. "For there are certain Monsters in Nature, say they, in whose Destruction all Civil Society is concern'd. To do any Thing to preserve them, nay, to slip a proper Opportunity of ridding the World of them, (whatever Terms we happen to be under with them) is to be false to what we owe to the whole Community, under the Pretence of Fidelity to a base Ally. When Matters are come to such an Extremity, that we must fight with Men; as we do with wild Beasts, Fallacy of any Kind (which at other Times is justly detested) may, in some Measure, be then excus'd; nor have they, who in their Dealings with others, are regardless of all Laws; both human and divine, any Reason to complain, if, upon some Occasions, they meet with a Retaliation."

Jael, when she took the Hammer and Nail in her Hand, might have this perhaps; and much more to say in her own Vindication: But what absolves her most effectually with us, is, the Declaration, which God had made in Favour of the *Israelites*; by the wonderful Defeat of *Jabin's* Army, and the Direction and Impulse, wherewith he excited her to dispatch his vanquish'd General. (x) Had she been left to herself, she would have been contented (one would think) to have let him laid still, until *Barak*, who was

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"*Nathan* to *David* (2 Sam. vii. 3.) which God presently contradicted (Ver. 4, 5, &c.) and several Discourses in *Job*, which God himself declares to be unsound; ye have not spoken of me the Thing that is right, as my Servant *Job* hath, Job xlii. 7. This being so, continues he, the worst, that any malicious Man can infer from this Place, is, — That this Song, tho' indited by a good Man, or Woman, was not divinely inspir'd, but only compos'd by a Person piously minded, and transported with Joy, for the Deliverance of God's People, but subject to Mistake; who therefore, out of Zeal to commend the happy Instrument of so great a Deliverance, might easily overlook the Indirectness of the Means, by which it was accomplish'd, and commended that, which should have been dislike'd. If it be urg'd that the Song was compos'd by *Deborah*, a Prophetess, and must consequently be divinely inspir'd, the Answer is, 1st, That it is not certain what Kind of Prophetess *Deborah* was, whether extraordinary, and infallible, or ordinary, and so liable to Mistake. But, 2dly, that every Expression, even of a true and extraordinary Prophet, was not divinely inspir'd, as is evident from *Nathan's* Mistake above-mention'd, and from *Samuel's* Error concerning *Eliab*, whom (for his outward Stature and Comeliness) he took to be the Lord's Anointed." 1 Sam. xvi. 6. *Pool's* Annotations.

(s) Numb. x. 29.

(t) De Jure Nat. & Gent. lib. iv. c. 2.

(u) Vid. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and*Saurin's* Dissert. sur la Defaite de *Jabin*.

(x) Scripture Vindicated, Part III.

From Judges
i. to the End
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in Pursuit of him, had come up, and surpriz'd him. To fall upon him herself was an Enterprize exceedingly bold and hazardous, and above the Courage of her Sex; and therefore we may conclude, that if it was God, who inspir'd her with this extraordinary Resolution, she was not to be blam'd (notwithstanding the Peace between *Jabin* and her Family) for being obedient to the heavenly Impulse; because all Obligations to Man must necessarily cease, when brought in Competition with our higher Obligations towards God.

Barak's Faith
clear'd.

WHOEVER looks into the Catalogue of the Worthies, whom the Author to the *Hebrews* enumerates, will soon perceive, that, as he is far from being exact in the Order, wherein he places them, so; by the *Faith*, for which he commends them, he means no more, than a Belief of what God told them, and ready Obedience to his Commands, whenever they were signify'd to them by a proper Authority. *Deborah* was, at this Time, a very remarkable Woman, famous for the Administration of Justice, and Determination of Controversies among the People; but, notwithstanding this, it would have been Rashness in *Barak*, to have gone upon so hazardous an Undertaking without any farther Assurance than this. He did not absolutely refuse to go, nay, he offer'd to go upon the first Notice, and for this his Faith is commended in Scripture; but then he was minded to have some farther Conviction, that this Notice was from God, and of this he could not have a better Proof, than if the *Prophetess* herself would go, and share with him the Fate of the Battle.

THE Enemy was as formidable an one, as ever the *Israelites* had to encounter. Nine hundred Chariots of Iron, when, (y) in Times of greater military Preparation, *Mithridates* had but one hundred, and *Darius* no more than two hundred in their Armies, was enough to inject Terror into any Commander, whose Forces consisted all

of Foot, and had no proper Defence against these destructive Engines. Good Reason had he therefore to apprehend, that the People would not so readily have enlisted themselves into the publick Service, had there not been a Person of her Character to appear at the Head of it. She was a *Prophetess*, and had receiv'd frequent Revelations from God; and therefore, when the People saw her personally engag'd in it, they would be the apter to be persuaded, that the Expedition was by God's Appointment, and therefore, without all Peradventure, would be attended with Success. And as *Deborah's* joining with *Barak* in the Expedition, might be thought a good Expedient to raise a sufficient Number of Forces; so might it equally be thought a Means effectual, both to prevent their Desertion, and to animate them to the Fight: And accordingly (z) *Josephus* tells us, "That, when the two Armies lay encamp'd, one within the Sight of the other, the *Israelites* were struck with such a Terror at the infinite Odds of the Enemy in Numbers, that both *General* and Soldiers were once upon the very Point of shifting for themselves, without so much as striking a Blow; but upon *Deborah's* Assurance, that it was the Cause of God, and that he himself would assist, and bring them off, they were prevail'd upon to stand the Shock of the Battle."

BUT there is one Advantage more, which *Barak* might more especially promise to himself in having *Deborah's* Company in this Expedition, and that is, that he might not want an Oracle to resort to upon any Emergency, that might happen; because he was persuaded, that God, who, by her Means, had put his People upon this Enterprize, would not fail, by her Mouth, to direct him in the Management of it. And, accordingly, in the grand Point of all, viz. when it was the properest Time to engage the Enemy, we find the Benefit, which he receiv'd from her Company and Conversation: (a) Up, says she; for

From Judges
i. to the End
of Ruth.

(y) *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

(z) *Antiq. lib. v. c. 6.*

(a) *Judges* iv. 14.

A. M. 2561, *Sc.*
 Ant. Christ. 1443, *Sc.*
for this is the Day, in which the Lord has delivered Sisera into thy Hand. Is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak went down from Mount Tabor, and ten Thousand Men after him, and the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all his Chariots, and all his Host, with the Edge of the Sword.

Gideon's Faith
 asserted.

THE Faith of those Persons, whose Actions are recorded in the *Old Testament*, and *Fame* commemorated in the *New*, consisted (as we said) in a firm Belief of God's Declarations, and a ready Obedience to his Commands; and how can we account *Gideon* culpable in either of these Respects? When the Angel of the Lord (or a Person much superior, as some suppose) appear'd to him, and brought him the News of God's having appointed him to deliver his People from the Oppression of the *Midianites*, he seems indeed at first to be willing to decline the Office, as conscious of his own Incapacity; but desires withal to have some Conviction given him, (as who, upon the like Occasion, would not have desir'd some?) that the Messenger came from Heaven, and was in Reality no *Impostor*; but when once he was satisfy'd in this, he never pretended to dispute the divine Command.

HE knew very well, that, when he pulled down the Altar and Grove of *Baal*, he must necessarily incense the whole Country against him, and run the Hazard of his own Life; and yet, to do it more effectually, he took to his Aid ten of his Father's Servants, and, that he might meet with no Molestation, did it in the Night. He knew very well, that when he *sounded a Trumpet* in order to form an Insurrection in the Country, and to raise some Forces to assert his Nation's Liberty, the *Midianites* would interpret this as an open Declaration of War, and come against him with an Army, as numerous as the *Sand on the Sea-shore* for Multitude; but this he matter'd not. He knew, that two and thirty thousand Men, when he had rais'd them, were but a Handful, in Comparison of the Enemy; and yet, to

see two and twenty thousand of these desert him all at once, and of the ten thousand, that remain'd, no more left at last than bare three hundred; this was enough to stagger any one's Mind, that had not a firm Reliance on the Word, and Promises of God. He knew, that three hundred Men, had they been all *Giants*, and arm'd *Cap-a-pee* with Coats of *Mail*, would not be able to do any great Execution against so numerous a Foe; but when he found, that, instead of being arm'd, he was to attack the Enemy *naked*, and, instead of Swords and Spears, (as usual) his Soldiers were to march in such a Plight, as was never seen before, with every one a Light, a Pitcher, and a Trumpet in his Hand; and, when they came up with their Enemy, were to break their Pitchers, flourish their Lights, sound their Trumpets, and, instead of regular fighting, were only to shout and roar, like so many Men either *mad* or *drunk*; who but a *Gideon*, that had his Faith confirm'd by so many Visions and Miracles before, would have obey'd, and put in Execution such Orders, as must have been thought wild, and frantick, and absurd, had they proceeded from any other Mouth but God's?

WELL therefore might he be allow'd to request a Repetition, nay, a Multiplication of Miracles, who was to have the Trial of his Faith and Obedience carry'd to such an Extremity: But the Truth of the Matter is, that it was not for his own Sake, that he made this Request. He had been sufficiently convinc'd by the Fire's breaking out of the Rock at the Touch of the Rod in the Angel's Hand, that nothing was impossible to God, and that the Means, which he directed (how incongruous soever they might appear to Men) would certainly not fail of their Effect: But it was for the Sake of his *Allies*, that had just now join'd him in this Expedition, that he sent up his Petition to God, to have them likewise satisfy'd; and therefore we may observe, that when all the *Qenizites* were come up, and encamp'd together, then

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 i. to the End
 of Ruth.

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then (very likely in the Audience of the whole Army) he requested of God, (b) *and said, if thou wilt save Israel by my Hand, as thou hast said, behold I will put a Fleece of Wool in the Floor, &c.* It was for their Sakes, I say, that the Miracles were wrought, that they, who were to share in so hazardous a War, and *to destroy the Armies of the Aliens* with so small a Force, nay, with no Force at all, should have some Assurance given them, that the God of *Israel*, who had so often promis'd their Fore-Fathers, that if they would continue in his Favour, (c) *one of them should chase a Thousand, and two of them put ten Thousand to Flight*, was determin'd to assist them in this Enterprize.

His punishing
the Gadites
vindicated.

If ever this Promise was literally fulfilled, it was in this Defeat, which *Gideon* gave the *Midianites*: But the Inhabitants of *Succoth* and *Penuel*, it seems, made but a Jest and Ridicule of it, for which they receiv'd a condign Punishment; but of what Kind their Punishment was, *Commentators* are not so well agreed. (d) The Word in the *Hebrew* signifies *Threshing*, and thence it is generally inferr'd, that *Gideon* caus'd the principal Men of *Succoth*, who had deny'd his Soldiers Provision in their Distress, to be stripp'd naked, laid flat on the Ground, † and a good Quantity of Thorns and Briars heaped on them; that so, by Cart-Wheels, or other heavy Carriages passing over them, their Flesh might be pierc'd and torn, and themselves tortur'd, if not quite crush'd to Death.

THIS was a Punishment, not much unlike what *David* inflicted on the *Ammonites*, after he had taken their City *Rabbah*; but the *Ammonites*, in my Opinion, did not so much deserve it, as these: For thus stands the Case. *Gideon* was now in Pursuit of two Kings, who, after the general Rout of their Army, were making their Escape with a Party of five thousand Men. Coming to two Places in the Tribe of *Gad*, who were *Israelites* as well as he, and equally concern'd to have been venturing

their Lives for the publick Liberty, he is deny'd a small Refreshment for his Men fatigu'd all the Night with fighting for them, and, without some Recruit, in no Condition to continue their Pursuit: So that, as far as in them lay, instead of assisting their gallant Country-Men, who had merited every Thing from their Hands, these *Gadites* took part with the Enemy, and did what they could to facilitate their Escape, by denying some Relief to their weary Pursuers. By the Right of War *Gideon* might have demanded this Help from any Nation, but much more from a People, who were embark'd in the same Cause, and whose Refusal of so small a Boon had the Aggravation of Perfidy and Ingratitude, as well as Hard-heartedness, to inflame its Guilt.

NOR was this all. His Brethren, the *Gadites*, not only refus'd him this common Courtesy, but were very witty likewise, in making their Jests and *Sarcasms* upon *Gideon*. They upbraided him with the Smallness of his Army, and magnify'd the Strength of his Enemies, and thereby, not only did all they could to discourage his Men in their Pursuit, but endeavour'd likewise to have it believ'd, that there was no Interposition of God in gaining this Victory, and that *Gideon* would never be able to accomplish it: And so, to their other vile Qualities, they added Insult and Irreligion; a Contempt of God, and a Disparagement of the Man, *whom the Lord had made so strong for himself*. And therefore it is not at all to be wonder'd at, that *Gideon*, under all this Exasperation, should chuse to bring the two captive Kings (with whom they had upbraided him) in Triumph to these two Places, and then resent the Affront, which was done to God, as well as himself, by making a severe Example of some of the chief Offenders.

It is suggested indeed by some, that *Gideon* was as great an Offender as any in his making an *Ephod* for the Purpose of Idolatry; but before we admit of so rash a Censure,

From Judges
i. to the End
of Ruth.

His Ephod
explain'd.

(b) Judges vi. 37.

(c) Deut. xxxii. 30.

(d) Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.

† This was the Manner of threshing their Corn in the Eastern Countries.

A. M. 2561. *Æc.*
Ant. Christ. 1443. *Æc.*
a Censure, we should enquire a little into the Nature of this *Ephod*, and for what possible Purpose it was at first made.

(e) AN *Ephod*, we know, is a common Vestment belonging to Priests in general; but that of the High-Priest was of very great Value. This Vestment however was not so peculiar to the Priests, but that sometimes we find the Laity (as in the Case of *David* bringing Home the Ark of God) allow'd to wear it; and therefore some have imagin'd, that the *Ephod*, which *Gideon* made, was only a rich and costly *Robe of State*, which, on certain Occasions, he might wear to denote the Station, he held in the *Jewish* Republick; But if his Intent was only to distinguish himself from others by such a particular Vestment, how this could give Occasion to the People's falling into Idolatry, or any Way become a Snare to *Gideon* and his House, we cannot conceive.

OTHERS therefore suppose, that the Word *Ephod* is a short Expression to denote the High-Priest's Breast-Plate, together with the *Urim* and *Thummim*; and hence, by an easy Figure, they are led to think, that to make an *Ephod* is to establish a Priesthood; and thereupon conclude, that *Gideon's* Crime, in making this *Ephod*, was not to establish Idolatry, but only to institute another Priesthood, besides that, which God had appointed in *Aaron* and his Posterity: And, to this Purpose, they suppose, that he erected a private Tabernacle, an Altar, a Mercy-Seat, with Cherubims, &c. that, being now made the supreme Governor, he might consult God at his own House, in such difficult Points, as occur'd in his Administration.

BUT, besides that it is not easy to imagine, that a Man, familiar with God, and chosen by him, as *Gideon* was, should after so signal a Victory as he had obtain'd, immediately apostatize, as he must have done, had he set up an Oracle in his own House; there seems to have been no Manner of Necessity for it, because *Shiloh*

(where the Tabernacle stood) was in the Tribe of *Ephraim*, which adjoin'd to that of *Manasseh*, whereunto *Gideon* belong'd.

From Judges i. to the End of Ruth.

(f) Nor should it be forgotten, that this *Ephod* was (g) set up in *Opbrab*, which Place *Gideon* (h) quitted, as soon as he had resign'd his publick Employ, and retiring to a Country-House of his own in all Probability left this *Ephod* behind him: There is Reason therefore to believe, that the Design of setting it up, was merely to be a Monument of his remarkable Victory over the *Midianites*, in like Manner as other Conquerors had done before him; only, as the common Custom was, to erect a Pillar, or hang up Trophies upon the like Occasion, he chose rather to make an *Ephod*, or Priest's Habit, (perhaps all of solid Gold) as a Token, that he ascrib'd this Victory only to God, and triumph'd in nothing so much, as in the Reformation of the true Religion by that Means. This was an Action of no bad Intent in *Gideon*, tho', in After-Times, when the People began to return to Idolatry, and had this Fancy, among others, that God would answer them at *Opbrab*, where this *Ephod* was, as well as at his Tabernacle in *Shiloh*, it was perverted to a bad Purpose. But, as this Abuse arose from the mad Caprice of the People, and not from any ill Intent in *Gideon*, he is no more chargeable therewith, than *Moses* was with the idolatrous Worship, which the *Israelites*, in future Ages, paid to the *Brazen-Serpent*, which he, for very beneficial Purposes at first set up.

IT is generally suppos'd, (i) that the sacred History has not furnish'd us with a compleat Catalogue of the several Judges, that govern'd *Israel*, from the Death of *Joshua* to the Reign of *Saul*; and that even of those, whom it takes Notice of, it relates nothing, but what was most remarkable in their Lives and Actions: And yet, notwithstanding this Conciseness, it is far more exact and instructive, than the History of *Josephus*, to which (k) *Scaliger*

Josephus's History censur'd.

8 G

seems

(e) *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries. *Pool's* Annotations, &c. (f) *Patrick's* Commentary. (g) *Judg.* viii. 27. (h) *Ver.* 29. (i) *Saurin's* Dissert. sur Hégion tué par Ebul. (k) *Proleg. de Emend. Temp.*

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.

seems to give a Preference above all others. The Fault of *Josephus* (as any one may perceive it) is this:—That he omits the Account of several Miracles, which the holy Scripture relates, for fear that other Nations, to whom he writes, should think he gives too much into the *Marvellous*, tho', at the same Time, he makes no Scruple of sacrificing the Glory of God to his own private Character.

FOR this Reason it is, that (*l*) he says nothing of the Angel's touching with the End of his Rod the Sacrifice, which *Gideon* had prepar'd, and so causing Fire to flame out of the Rock, and consume it; nothing of the two *Signs*, which God was pleas'd to grant him, for the Confirmation of his and his Confederates Faith, exhibited in the Fleece's being at one Time wet, and, at another, dry; nothing, of his Zeal in demolishing the Altar and Grove of *Baal*, for which he drew upon himself the Indignation of all the Abettors of Idolatry; and here, in the Matter of *Shamgar*, he suppresses the Circumstances of his slaying an hundred *Philistines* with an *Ox-Goad*, tho' this be the only remarkable Action recorded of him, and what may, not improbably, be thus accounted for.

*Shamgar's
Valour with
the Ox-goad.*

IN not many Ages after this, we read, that these very *Philistines*, with whom he had *here* to do, had disarm'd the *Israelites* to that Degree, that (*m*) none in their whole Army, when they came to Action, had either Sword or Spear, but only *Saul* and *Jonathan* his Son; nay, that they would not so much as suffer a Smith to live among them, for fear of their providing themselves with *military* Weapons, but oblig'd them to repair to them, whenever they wanted to sharpen, or repair their Instruments of Husbandry.

Now it must be allow'd, that the Scriptures say nothing of any such Reduction as this, in the Days of *Shamgar*: But if such was the Policy of the *Philistines* in the Beginning of *Saul's* Reign, why may

we not suppose that it commenc'd some Time sooner? This certainly the Scripture tells us expressly, that, (*n*) *in the Days of Shamgar, the Highways were unoccupied, and the Inhabitants of Villages ceased*, by Reason of the *Philistines*, who came and plunder'd the Country, and carry'd off what Booty they pleas'd without Molestation; and therefore it is not unlikely, that, for Want of some regular Arms, (whereof the *Philistines* had stripp'd the *Israelites*) *Shamgar* might make himself a *Goad*, so well contriv'd, that with it he could kill any Man, without any Manner of Suspicion, that it was made for that Purpose, but only for common Use; that with this Instrument he usually went to plow; and when, at any Time, the *Philistines* made their Inroads into his Lands, he, with the Assistance of his Servants, (who perhaps were arm'd in the like Manner) fell upon them, and, at several Times, kill'd to the Number of six hundred of them in the Space of about twenty Years. This is a fair *Analysis* of the Sense of the Words; and where is the great Incongruity of this? Or what indeed is there in the whole, that an ordinary Master of a Family, with his *Domesticks* about him, might not do, even tho' we should not call in any supernatural Strength to his Assistance?

THERE is more Reason however, why we should have recourse to the supernatural Aid of God, in *Samson's* slaying a thousand of these *Philistines*, at one Heat as it were, with no other Weapon, than the *Jaw-Bone of an Ass*. (*o*) For tho' *Asses* in *Syria* (as the Learned affirm) are both stronger, and larger, than what we have with us, and their Bones consequently better fitted for such hard Service as this; yet it must be own'd, that it was by the wonderful Strength, that God infus'd into him, and not any Aptitude of the *Instrument*, he made use of, that he was enabled to do all this Execution, which is only incredible to those, (*p*) that do not consider the Power

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And *Samson's*,
with the *Ass's*
Jaw-Bone,
accounted for.

(*l*) Antiq. lib. v. c. 8.
Annotations.

(*m*) 1 Sam. xiii. 20, &c.
(*p*) *Patrick's* Commentary.

(*n*) Judg. v. 6, 7.

(*o*) *Pool's*

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Power of God, who can raise our natural Strength to what Degree he pleases, and, at the same Time, infeeble the Spirits of those, who oppose his Designs, in such a Manner, that they shall have no Power to help themselves.

It must be own'd however, that there are some Circumstances in this Transaction, which might possibly intimidate the *Philistines*, and thereby contribute to facilitate the Slaughter, which *Samson* made among them. The People of *Judah* had now prevail'd with him to suffer himself to be bound, and conducted to the *Philistines* Camp: The *Philistines*, as soon as they saw him coming, ran out with Joy to receive him, and very likely forgot to take their Arms with them, as knowing for certainty, that he was safe enough now, and bound, as we say, to his good Behaviour. But when, contrary to their Expectation, they saw him first break the Cords so easily and suddenly, and then coming upon them with such Fury and Vengeance, (q) 'tis not unlikely, that this might put them in no small Confusion, and, as they straggled about in their Flight, give him the Opportunity of slaying them one by one, as he came up with them.

This, we must allow, is the highest Instance of personal *Prowess*, that we any where read of; and yet *profane Historians* inform us of other Men, who, by their mere natural Courage, unassisted by any divine Power, (as the Scripture informs us *Samson* was) have made great Havock among their Enemies: For *Flavius Vopiscus* reports, that in the *Sarmatick War*,

Aurelian slew forty eight Men in one Day, and in several Days * 950, which diminishes the Wonder of this Atchievement of *Samson's* not a little; especially considering, that the *Philistines*, in their Surprise, might think that this was all a Trick and Management of his *Conductors* to get so many unarmed Men into their Power, and that they too were ready to fall upon them, and assist him, in case they should make any Opposition against their *Champion*.

THAT *Samson*, after so long a Fatigue, should be almost ready to * die with Thirst, is no strange Thing at all; but the Question is, how, in a Place where no Water was, he came to have his Thirst allay'd? The *Hebrew* Word, *Ma'kes*, does properly signify the *Socket*, in which the great Teeth in the Jaw are fasten'd; and, from hence *Bochart*, among many others, endeavours to maintain by Arguments, that God made one of these Teeth drop out of the Jaw, wherewith *Samson* had done all this Execution, and immediately a Stream of Water gush'd out from thence: But, with all due Deference to the Learning of so great a Man, (r) 'tis somewhat strange, that he should not observe, (when he had this Passage under Consideration) that such a Miracle as this would be inconsistent with the Words which follow, (s) *wherefore he called the Name thereof*, i. e. of the Fountain of Water, which gush'd out, *En-bakkor*, or *the Well of him that cried to God, which is in Lehi even unto this Day*. *Lehi* is here therefore the proper Name of a Place.

This

(q) *Patrick's Commentary.*

* Upon this Occasion the Boys made a Song, (not much unlike that, which *Samson* made of himself, *Judg.* xv. 16.) which, after a military Manner, they shouted in their Dances. Mille, mille, mille, mille, mille, mille, decollavimus unus homo; Mille, mille, mille, mille, decollavimus; Mille, mille, mille: Vivat, qui mille, mille occidit: tantum vini habet nemo, quantum effudit Sanguinis. Vid. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* *Josephus* gives us a strange Account of the Reason of *Samson's* Thirst, and what there is no Manner of Foundation for in the Scripture. " *Samson* (*says he*) was so transported with the Thoughts of this Victory, that he had the " Vanity to assume the Honour of the Action to himself, without ascribing the Glory of it to God's Power and Providence, as he ought to have done: But while this arrogant and over-weening Humour was yet upon him, he found " himself seized with a violent parching Thirst, which gave him to understand, that, after all his Successes, he was " but Flesh and Blood still, and liable to human Infirmities. The Sense of this Disorder brought him to the Knowledge of himself, and to a penitent Confession, that the Victory was God's, and that he was able to do nothing of " himself, without the Divine Assistance. He begg'd Pardon for his past Vanity and Presumption. His Prayers " were not in vain; for immediately there gush'd out of a Rock, that was hard by, a Stream of delicious Water to " relieve him in his raging Drought." *Antiq. lib. v. c. 1.*

(r) *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

(s) *Judg.* xv. 19.

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of Ruth.

The Water
from the Jaw:
Bone, how.

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This Place had doubtless its Appellation from this Adventure of *Samson's* with the Jaw-Bone, and from this Place God caus'd a Spring to arise, that he might allay his Hero's Thirst. For it is incongruous to think, that the Jaw of an Ass, or any other Creature could have subsisted to the Time, when the Author of this Book of *Judges* liv'd; or, (if, all this while, none should have had the Curiosity to take away this wonderful Bone) that God should, out of the Socket of one of its Teeth, cause a Stream of Water to flow, by one continual, useless Miracle.

IT must then be a Mistake in our Version, to render the Words, *God clave an hollow Place, which was in the Jaw*, when (according to the * Sense of the Antients upon this Place) they should be translated, *which was in Lehi*. For the Truth of the Matter is, that tho' this Jaw be long extinct and gone, yet those, who have travell'd through this Part of *Palestine*, do inform us, that, in the Suburbs of *Eleutheropolis*, where *Lehi* very likely stood, the Fountain, which arose upon this Occasion, is still remaining, and called *the Fountain of the Jaw*, to this Day.

BUT be that as it will, whether the Water, which refresh'd *Samson* in this his Distress, came from the Jaw-Bone, or (as others think) from a Cliff in a Rock, or an Hollow in the Earth, the Miracle is the same, tho' it may not be improper (whenever we can by an easier Interpretation) to take away Occasion from those that seek Occasion to disparage the Oracles of God.

Samson in all Points not to be vindicated.

WE are not however concern'd to vindicate *Samson* in all his extravagant and

outrageous Actions; such as his marrying an Idolatress, and then leaving her; his loving lewd Women, and discovering the great *Secret*, whereon his *All* depended, to a common *Prostitute*; his killing some, and maiming others, who perhaps had never done him any personal Injury; and setting the whole Country on Fire, to burn their Corn-Fields and Vineyards, with many other Things, that might be alledg'd against him. All that we have to say is, that God rais'd him up to be a *Scourge* to the *Philistines*, and that, had there not been some *Peculiarities* in his Temper, he had not been so proper an Instrument in his Hand; or that had he not run himself so often into *Præmunires*, he would not have had so frequent Occasion to employ the Strength, which God had given him, in extricating himself from thence by the Death and Destruction of his Enemies. Tho' therefore there was no *Fatality* in making him of this unruly Disposition, (for that he contracted himself) yet there was a wise Direction of God's Providence in making his rugged Temper subservient to his Purposes, and even out of his Faults and Enormities, extracting the Plagues and Punishment of his Foes; for (t) *surely the Wrath of Man shall praise thee*, says the *Psalmist*, and *the Remainder of his Wrath shalt thou restrain*. This we may lay down, as a general Reason for God's making use of so furious an Instrument as *Samson* was, in the Execution of his Will: And now let us examine a little into the other Inconsistencies, which some pretend to espy in the Sequel of this Story.

A CERTAIN anonymous Author, † in a Dissertation upon *Samson's Foxes*, has solv'd

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Samson's Foxes accounted for.

* To this Purpose we may observe, that the *Seventy Interpreters*, the *Chaldee Paraphrast*, and *Josephus* in his History, make it to be a proper Name of a Place, whence the Waters gush'd out. The Words in the *Septuagint* are καὶ ἔρρηξεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἐν Σιαγόνι, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ ὕδωρ, *God clave an hollow Place in the Ground, which was afterwards called Lehi, or Siagon, and out of it issu'd Water*. *Josephus* is quoted before, only he had these Words farther, ὅθεν ὁ Σαρφάρις ἐπάλασσε τὸ χαλκίον, Σαγύρα, *which Rock, (says our Translator of Josephus) from the Exploit of Samson, bears the Name of a Jaw, unto this very Day*. And the Words of the *Paraphrast* are directly to the same Purpose: So that it is much to be wonder'd at, how so learned and acute a Man as *Bochart*, should overlook these Sentiments of the Antients. *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

(t) *Psal. lxxvi. 10.*

† Mr *Bernard*, in his *Repub. des Lettres*, Oct. 1707. Pag. 407. makes mention of a small Treatise in 12mo, intitled, *Dissertation sur l'âne de Balaam, les Remarques de Samson, la Machoire d'âne*, &c. from whom I have extracted the Author's Sentiment, as Mr *Bernard* has represented it, but could, by no Means, meet with the Book itself, and cannot therefore properly enter into an Examination of the Author's Opinion: However, I thought convenient to make mention of it, because there seems to be something ingenious, as well as singular in it.

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solv'd the whole Difficulty of that Piece of History, if we will but admit of his Suppositions. He supposes, that the Word *Schualim*, which we render *Foxes*, should, with a little Variation, be written *Schoalim*, which denotes *Sheaves*, or rather *Shocks of Corn*; and that the Word *Zanab*, which, in our Translation, is a *Tail*, equally signifies the *extream*, or *outermost Part* of any Thing. Thus, in an Orchard planted in the Form of a *Quincunx*, the farthest Tree is called *Zanab*; and, in like Manner, the *extream* or *outside Shocks* in a Field may be so called here; and then the Sense of the Words will be, "That *Samson*, at different Places, set fire to three hundred Shocks of Corn, which stood in the Out-Parts of the Fields, belonging to the *Philistines*, and so, by the Fire's spreading from Shock to Shock, destroy'd, in a Manner, all their Crop."

BUT without entertaining any novel Interpretation, and which upon Examination perhaps will hardly bear the Test, we may adventure to say, that these three hundred Foxes, which *Samson* is said to have caught, are not, even in a *literal* Sense, so incredible a Thing, nor so liable to Ridicule, as some may imagine. For we are to consider, (as the learned (u) *Bochart*, from the Account of several Travellers, evinces) that the whole Country, especially that Part of it, which belong'd to the Tribe of *Gad*, so abounded with Foxes, that from them (x) several Places took their Names: That, under the Name of Foxes, may not improperly be comprehended a Creature, very much like them, called *Thoës*, which go in such Herds, that two hundred of them have been seen together at once; that the Manner of catching them was not (as we may imagine) by hunting only, but by Snares and Nets, as the abovemention'd Author plainly demonstrates; and that *Samson* did not do this alone by himself, in a Day and Night's Time, but that, being assisted by his Ser-

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vants and Neighbours, (as he was a Man of considerable Eminence in his Country) he might possibly be some Weeks in accomplishing his Design.

HIS Design however will not appear so *romantick*, if we consider what *Collections* have been made of Creatures, much wilder, and rarer, than Foxes; that (y) *Lucius Sylla*, when he was *Prætor*, order'd to be shewn, on the Amphitheatre, an hundred Lions; *Julius Cæsar*, when he was *Dictator*, four hundred; and that (z) the Emperor *Probus*, at one Spectacle, exhibited a thousand Ostriches, a thousand Stags, an hundred *Lybian*, and a hundred Syrian Leopards, and an infinite Number of other strange Creatures: And why then should it be thought to be a Thing so incredible, as to need the Intervention of a Miracle (as some contend) for *Samson*, with the Assistance of his Friends, who might be let into his Design, to get together, in some Time, three hundred Foxes, in a Country, that every where abounded with them?

FOXES, (we are none of us ignorant) are very apt to do a great deal of Mischief, wherever they *abound*, and (a) therefore *Samson* might have this farther Aim in collecting so many, *viz.* that thereby he might clear his own Country of such noxious Animals, and at the same Time, that he very well knew, no Creature could be more convenient for his Purpose of annoying, and detriming his Enemies. For, as these Creatures are very swift of Foot, and have a natural Dread of Fire, they could not well fail (when once they were turn'd into it) of setting the standing Corn in a Blaze, and then, as they were ty'd in Couples, Tail to Tail, *this* would make them draw one against the other, and so being retarded in their Flight, and staying longer in a Place, they would give the Fire more Time to spread itself, and make a Conflagration universal.

UPON the whole therefore we may conclude, that the mustering up such a
8 H Number

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of Ruth.

(u) *Hierof.* i. 3. c. 10.
Probo.

(x) *Judg.* i. 35.
(a) *Calmet's* Commentary in *Judg.* xxv.

(y) *Pliny*, lib. viii. c. 16.

(z) *Apud Vopis.* in

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Number of *Foxes*, in order to burn up the *Philistines* Corn, was neither a foolish nor impracticable Thing, supposing *Samson* was at Liberty to prosecute his Revenge in this Manner. But for his Righteousness in this, and many of his other Proceedings we are (as we said before) no ways accountable, unless his being consider'd as a *Chief* among the *Israelites* (whom God had rais'd up to annoy the *Philistines*, and in such Methods as this, rather than *open War*, to weaken them by his personal Valour and Strength) may be admitted in Justification of what he did. But to proceed.

Wherein lay
Samson's great
Strength.

(b) WHETHER *Samson's* Hair was the *physical*, or only *moral* Cause of his Strength, needs not, I think, be made any Question. For, tho' Plenty of Hair may be some Indication of bodily Strength, yet since he, that is naturally strong, becomes not less so, by having his Hair cut off, (tho' this was certainly the Case of *Samson*) it must necessarily follow, that his Hair was no *natural* Cause of his Strength, but that it was a supernatural and miraculous Gift, not (c) perhaps always inherent in him, but only dispens'd at certain Times, when the *Spirit of God* came upon him. (d) It depended indeed on the Covenant made between God and him, the Sign of which Covenant was his *Hair*; and therefore when, in Compliance to his Harlot, he suffer'd his Hair to be cut off, he broke the Covenant with God, and forfeiting the *Spirit* of Strength and Courage, was left to his own natural Weakness, and so became an easy Prey to his Enemies. But having been now a considerable Time in Prison, wherein he was cruelly us'd, he began to repent (no doubt) of his Folly; and therefore making fervent Supplications to God for Pardon of the Violation of his *Nazaritism*, he renew'd his Vow, and so, being restor'd to the Condition he was in before he lost the Favour of God, his Strength began to grow and increase, in Proportion as his Hair did.

WHEN his Hair was thus grown, and his Strength return'd, it is made a Question, whether the *House*, (as it is called in Scripture) which he pulled down, was the Temple of *Dagon*, for whose Honour this *Festival* was appointed, or some other Edifice?

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THAT it was not a common House, is evident from the Multitude of the People, which it contain'd; and tho' the Temples of the *Philistines* are suppos'd (e) by some to have been of the same Figure and Make, with those in *Egypt*, i. e. a Kind of a *Rotunda*, flat-roof'd, with a large Portico without, and Pillars within to sustain the Building; yet this seems to be no more than a Fiction, devoid of all Authority, and accommodated to the Purpose of solving this Difficulty. 'Tis not certain, that the *Egyptian* Temples were built in this Manner, and much more probable it is, that this *House* of their famous God *Dagon* was made of Stone; and tho' it wanted no proper Supports, yet it is scarce supposable, that in a Structure of this Kind its whole Weight should be supported by two Pillars only, and these so very contiguous, that *Samson* could lay hold on them both at one Time.

THE most general Opinion therefore is, that this was a Structure, which the *Philistines* made use of, (upon such Occasions as this) built all of Wood, and supported by wooden Pillars, in the Form of the *Theatres*, which, in After-Times, were in great Request among the *Romans*. Towards the Middle of this Building, we may suppose that there were two large Beams, upon which the Weight of the whole Structure lay; and that these Beams were supported by two Pillars, which stood in a Manner contiguous to each other. So that, as soon as *Samson* had mov'd and unsettled these, down must the *Principals*, and, with them, the whole Building, come. The only remaining Difficulty is, how a Building, made of Wood, and supported by two Pillars only, should be able

The Form of
the House,
which Samson
pull'd down.

(b) *Calmer's* Dictionary, under the Word *Samson*.
duction.

(c) *Calmer's* Commentary.

(e) *Patrick's* Commentary.

(d) *Collier's* Intro-

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able to contain such a Multitude of Men and Women? But whoever reads * *Pliny's Natural History*, will therein find a Description of two *Theatres*, built by *Curio*, capable of containing a much greater Number of People, than the *Philistines* are here said to be, and yet (what was a Wonder much greater, than the two Pillars here) whenever they were turn'd round, (as they frequently were) to meet and make one *Amphitheatre*, they both rested upon one *Hinge* only, which, had it happen'd to slip, must have occasion'd (as our Author tells us) a much greater Slaughter, than what was at the Battle of *Cannæ*; as, by the actual Fall of an Amphitheatre, built by *Atilius*, no fewer than fifty Thousand Persons (as * *Tacitus* relates the Story) were kill'd, wounded, and maim'd: Which is enough, one would think, to silence the Cavils of those, who are apt to fancy that a Building of such a Capacity could not be so contriv'd, as to rely only on two *Supporters*.

Other Exceptions concerning Samson.

AND indeed all the other Exceptions, which are usually made to *Samson's* Character and Conduct, are, in Effect, no more, than mere *Cavils*, which arise, in a great Measure, from an Unacquaintedness with the *Idiom* of the *Hebrew* Tongue. For as, when in *Jotham's* Parable, *Wine* is said (f) to cheer both God and Man; the Words *Elohim*, and *Anashim*, may signify as well *high* and *low*, *Princes* and *Peasants*, i. e. all Conditions of Men do find themselves cheer'd and refresh'd with

Wine; so, when it is said, that (g) *the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson*, we are not to understand thereby, that he had any *Grace* extraordinary, or sanctifying Influences of the blessed Spirit communicated to him, but only, that he was endu'd with wonderful Courage and Fortitude, an undaunted Mind, and a *super-natural* Strength of the Body at such and such Times, which enabled him to do great *Acts*, but made no Alteration in his *Manners*. And, in like Manner, when he is said to (h) have judged *Israel twenty Years*, we need not infer, that he was the supreme *Magistrate* in the *Republick*, (for that very probably was *Eli*) but only, that he was the chief Man of War, whose Valour was renown'd, and who did many great and signal Exploits, in order to rescue his Countrymen from the Oppression of their Enemies, and to restore them to their former Liberty. I say, in order to this, for he did not perfect their Deliverance; only, by the several Defeats which he gave them, and the great Damages he did them, he infus'd into the *Israelites* such a Spirit and Resolution, that, not many Years after, they took up Arms, and appearing in the Field against them, defeated, and subdu'd them; so that, in all the Days of *Samuel*, we hear of no farther Molestation from that Quarter.

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THE Scripture however furnishes us with a Reason why *Idolatry* was not abolish'd, and a thorough *Reformation* of Religion establish'd, during this Period:

For

* The Words of *Pliny*, upon this Occasion, are so very remarkable, that I thought it not improper to quote them. "Theatra duo juxta fecit amplissima è ligno, Cardinum singulorum versatili suspensa Libramento; in quibus utrisque Antemeridiano Ludorum Spectaculo edito inter sese averfis, ne invicem obstreperent Scene; & repente circumactis, ut contra starent; postremo jam die, discedentibus Tabulis, & cornibus inter se coeuntibus, faciebat Amphitheatrum, & Gladiatorum Spectacula edebat, ipsum magis auctoratum populum Romanum circumferens. Quid enim miretur quisque in hoc primum? Inventorem, an Inventum? Artificem, an Auctorem? Ausum aliquem hoc excogitare, an suscipere? parere, an jubere? Super omnia erat populi furor, federe ausi tum insidâ instabilique Sede—perituri momento aliquo, laxatis Machinis. Lib. xxxvi. c. 15.

* The Fall of this Amphitheatre *Tacitus* relates in these Words: "M. Licinio, L. Calpurnio Coss. ingentium Bellorum Cladem æquavit malum improvisum. Ejus Initium simul & Finis exstitit. Nam, cepto apud Fidenas Amphitheatro, Atilius, quidam libertini generis, quo spectaculum Gladiatorum celebraret, neque Fundamenta per solidum subdidit, neque firmis nexibus Ligneam compagem superstruxit, ut qui non abundantia Pecunie, nec municipali ambitione, sed in sordida mercede id negotium quævisset. Adfluxere avidi talium, Imperitante Tiberio, procul Voluptatibus habiti, virilis & muliebris sexus omnis Aetas, ob propinquitatem loci effusis, unde gravior pressa fuit, conferta mole, dein convulsa, dum ruit intus, atque in exteriora effunditur, immensamque vim mortalium, spectaculo intentos, aut qui circum adstabant, in præceps trahit, atque onerit ———— Quinquaginta hominum millia eo Casu debilitata, vel obruta sunt." Annal. lib. vi. c. 62.

(f) Jud. ix. 13.

(g) Ibid. xiv. 6.

(h) Ibid. xvi. 31.

Why the Judges did not abolish Idolatry.

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1443, &c.

For it tells us, that (i) in those Days, viz. between the Death of *Joshua*, and the first Institution of the *Judges*, there was no King i. e. no chief Ruler or Magistrate (for the regal Authority did not as yet begin) in *Israel*, but every one did that which was right in his own Eyes; so that considering the natural Propensity of the People to Idolatry, and the Want of a supreme Power lodg'd in some one's Hand to controul them, we need not wonder, that, before the Institution of *Judges*, they fell into the like Practices, with the Nations among whom they liv'd.

THE *Judges* indeed were invested with Authority to suppress these Practices; but then we are to consider, that few or none of them had a Jurisdiction over the whole Land of *Israel*, but were only Rulers of some particular *Cantons*, which they undertook to deliver from imminent Danger; and therefore how zealous soever they might be for a Reformation, yet since their Authority was not of sufficient Extension, the Wonder is not great, that (k) Idolatry should still be practis'd in some dark Corners of the Land, and that in the Tribe of *Dan* (which was so far distant) there should be set up *Micah's* graven Images, which he made, all the Time that the Ark of the Lord was at *Shiloh*.

SHILOH indeed was so far distant from several Parts of the Land of *Canaan*, that People began to account it too much Trouble to go up thither, to pay their Vows and Oblations, and therefore be-thought themselves of setting up private *Chapels*, wherein (as they suppos'd,) they might serve God as well; and, in the Institution of these, being left to their own Fancies, they generally intermix'd some idolatrous Practices, and, partly in Imitation of the *Cberubims* at *Shiloh*, and the *Teraphims* among their heathen Neighbours, chose to worship God through some visible Representation, which, by one Means or other, was carry'd on in Time to direct Idolatry.

THE *Moabites*, we know, even when

the *Israelites* were in a State of Independence, and had Reason sufficient to have a jealous Eye over them, by their Arts and Contrivances drew them into the Worship of their God *Baal-peor*; and much more might the Nations, to whom they were now in Subjection, succeed in their Attempts, either of recommending, or (if Need requir'd it) of forcing their Religion upon them: So that it was not to be wonder'd at, if Things ran into such Disorder when there was (if not a total Diffolution) at least a grievous Relaxation of Government; when some of the Governors themselves were far from being the best of Men; and, through Inclination, Intreaty, or Compulsion, the People were so liable, upon many Occasions, to relapse into Idolatry.

WHAT *Micah's* Intention might be in setting up a *Teraphim*, and other Kind of Images in his House, Commentators are not so well agreed. Those that are willing to apologize for the Thing, are ready to say, (l) that, as he liv'd in a Time of great Trouble and Confusion, wherein the publick Worship of God was much neglected, if not totally disus'd, his Design was to erect a Kind of domestick Tabernacle, wherein he might serve God in private, since he could not, without much Difficulty, do it in publick; and that the sacred Habiliments he made, his Ephod, his *Teraphim*, &c. were no more, than what he had seen at *Shiloh*: But since the Laws of God condemn (m) the making Images of any Kind, as Objects of Adoration; the setting up any religious Worship, different from what he had establish'd; the offering Sacrifices, or (n) performing any publick Service any where, but in the Tabernacle; and the employing any Priests in his Worship but such, as were of the Race of *Aaron*; 'tis certain that *Micah* was guilty of a Violation of all these Prohibitions, and, in the Matter of these graven and molten Images, cannot be excus'd from the Crime of Idolatry.

From Judges
i. to the End
of Ruth.

Micah's *Teraphim*, and his
Intent in setting it up.

AND

(i) Judg. xvii. 6.
xxxiv. 17. Deut. iv. 15, 16.

(k) Ibid. xviii. 3.

(l) *Calmet's* Commentary.

(m) Exod. xx. 4. and

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1443, &c.

AND indeed, unless he intended to patronize *that*, what Reason could he have to make any Innovations in Religion, since (according as we date this Action) either *Phineas*, or *Eli* were then in the High-Priest's Office, at *Shiloh*, where the publick Worship was preserv'd in all its *Formality*, and from whence *Micah*, who liv'd in the Mountains of *Ephraim*, was not so very distant, but that he might have gone thither, upon all solemn Occasions?

The Answer to
the Danites
fictitious.

THE Spirit of God therefore, in repeating the Admonition, that *in those Days, there was no King in Israel, &c.* before it begins to relate this Story of *Micah*, seems to insinuate, that this was a wicked and enormous Practice of his; that the Worship, he instituted, was *idolatrous*, and the Priest, he had procur'd to officiate, a *Renegado*: And if so, the Answer, this Priest receiv'd in Behalf of the *Danites*, and wherein he promis'd them the Success they met with, must have proceeded from no good *Principle*, unless we suppose, (what seems indeed most reasonable) that the *Levite* promis'd them Success, (because he was minded to please them) merely out of his own Head, tho', to give it a better Sanction, he might pretend to receive it from this fictitious Oracle. In this Case, there was no Occasion of having Recourse to any Oracle whatever; because any Man of a moderate Foresight, considering the undaunted Courage and Valour of the *Danites*, and the supine Negligence and Cowardice of the People of *Laiish*, (if once they came to Action) might, without the *Spirit of Prophecy*, foretel the Event.

THE Directions, which God gave *Moses* concerning *Joshua's* consulting the divine Oracle, are conceiv'd in these Words; — (o) *He shall stand before Eleazer, the Priest, who shall ask Counsel for him, after the Judgment of Urim, before the Lord; at his Word shall they go out, and at his Word shall they come in, both he and all the Children of Israel with him, even all the Congregation.* In all the Book of *Joshua* indeed we do not find,

that he had this constant Recourse to the Oracle, (p) and from hence, some *Jewish* Doctors conclude, that he was bound to do this only at the first Entrance upon his Office, to demonstrate to the People that he was *Moses's* Successor; but that afterwards the Spirit of *Prophecy* rested upon him, so that he knew how to conduct all publick Affairs without having Occasion for this oracular Advice. *Moses* we know made no Use of the *Urim* and *Thummim*, to consult God by the Mediation of the High-Priest; he went immediately and directly to God himself: But we do not read that *Joshua* was admitted to such Familiarity, nor had he such frequent Revelations from God, as his Predecessor had. And therefore, as God was pleas'd, in Supply of that Defect, to remit him to this Method of consulting him; we cannot but think, that upon every momentous Occasion, especially in the weighty Affairs of War, he was always careful to pursue it: And therefore the Words, in the Beginning of *Judges*, *Now, after the Death of Joshua, the Children of Israel asked of the Lord, saying, who shall go up for us against the Canaanites?* do not import, that they never consulted God by Way of *Urim* and *Thummim*, during the Life of *Joshua*, but rather, that after the Death of so great a Commander, they were at a Stand what to do, nor would they adventure to proceed in the War of *Canaan*, without following the same Directions, which were given to *Joshua*, and which he had so long pursu'd with so good Success.

NAY, the consulting of the divine Oracle, especially in Matters of War, was accounted so very necessary, in order to obtain Success, that some Commentators have esteem'd this the only Reason, why the *Israelites*, in so just a Cause as punishing the *Benjamites*, for their unheard-of Wickednesses, were, in two several Battles, defeated; even because they did not previously apply to God, as they should have done. (q) *They sent up indeed to the House*

From Judges
i. to the End
of Ruth.

(o) Numb. xxvii. 21.

(p) Vid. Patrick's Commentary in Locum.

(q) Judg. xx. 18.

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of the Lord, and asked Counsel of him, and said, which of us shall go up first to the Battle against the Children of Benjamin? i. e. which of their Tribes should have the the Honour or Hazard of making the first Attack: (r) But it is observable, that they had come to a full Resolution of making War against the Benjamites, and, to that Purpose, had made Draughts of the Men that were to be employ'd in it, without ever consulting God, whether an Enterprize of this Nature, wherein there was likely to be such an Effusion of the Blood of their Brethren, would be pleasing to him, or no. (s) The Truth is, they never question'd his Approbation of what they accounted so laudable: They presum'd upon his Protection and Assistance; and the vast Superiority of their Forces made them confident of Success. But now, in a Matter of such Moment as this, to overlook the divine Oracle, and be determin'd by their own Counsels only, and to march against one of their own Tribes, with a full Purpose of destroying them utterly, before they knew any Thing whether God had decreed their Destruction, or no, was not only an Instance of their Rashness and Presumption, but an Act likewise of Rebellion against the Majesty of God, who was the King of Israel, and, upon that Account alone, had Right to declare, whether they were to wage War against their Brethren the Benjamites, or no.

Why the Israelites were so severe upon the Benjamites.

BUT, supposing, that the Grounds of the War were justifiable, and God consenting to it, yet, why might not he take the Opportunity of punishing the Israelites, by Means of the Benjamites, for their tame Permission of Crimes more enormous, than what they had now taken into their Heads to chastize; (t) for suffering spiritual Adultery among them, even while they were so hot upon punishing carnal?

THE Laws, which God gave the Israelites against the Sin of Idolatry, were so very severe, that, whoever did but so much as entice another to the Commission

of it, was to lose all Title to Pity and Compassion, tho' he was never so dear a Friend, never so near a Relation: (u) *Thine Eye shall not pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him; thy Hand shall be first upon him to put him to Death, and afterwards the Hands of all the People.* But now, in the Case of Micah, and the whole Tribe of Dan, who had notoriously fallen into Idolatry, the Rulers of Israel were so far from putting this Law in Execution, that they conniv'd at their Apostacy: And therefore God took Occasion, from this Quarrel between the other Tribes and that of Benjamin, to make use of the latter, as Scourges to punish this base Connivance of the former; and, after he had twice employ'd them to this Purpose, he inverted the Fate of the War, and, in so doing, made the confederate Army of Israel the Instruments of that terrible Vengeance, which he took upon the Benjamites, in the Punishment of their execrable Lewdness. For this is the wonderful Wisdom of God's Providence, to employ the Passions of Men to his Purposes, and to make one wicked Set of People the Instruments of his punishing another, even as he expresses himself in another Case, that, in some Measure, is not incongruous to this: — (x) *Woe unto the Assyrian, the Rod of mine Anger, and the Staff in their Hand, is mine Indignation. — Against the People of my Wrath will I give him Charge to take the Spoil, and to take the Prey, and to tread them down like the Mire in the Streets. — Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his Heart think so; but it is in his Heart to destroy, and to cut off Nations not a few. — Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole Work upon Mount Sion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the Fruit of the stout Heart of the King of Assyria, and the Glory of his high Looks; and, in like Manner here, when, by the Hand of the Benjamites, he had chastiz'd the rest of the*

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i. to the End
of Ruth.

(r) Calmer's Commentary sur Juges, c. xx.
Commentary on Judg. xx.

(s) Deut. xiii. 8, 9.

(t) Saurin's Diss. Vol. IV. Dissert. 18.

(u) Isaiah x. 5, &c.

(x) Patrick's

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the *Israelites*, by the Hand of the *Israelites*, he punish'd the *Benjamites* for their gross Impieties, making use of their respective Passions, and furious Resentments, to accomplish his Will; albeit *they meant it not so, neither did their Heart think so; but it was only in their Hearts to destroy, and cut off one another.*

WHEN the Heat of their Fury however was abated, and the *Israelites* began to look back with a little Coolness upon what they had done; how they had almost totally destroy'd one Tribe of their Brethren, and bound themselves by an Oath never to marry their Daughters to any of the poor Remains of it; (which could not but prove the Extirpation of the whole) the Joy and Triumph of their late Victory was turn'd into Mourning and bitter Lamentation.

The Unlawfulness of their Oath.

WHETHER this Oath, against contracting any Affinity with the *Benjamites*, was in itself lawful, and obligatory, or no, (y) some Interpreters, without any Manner of Reason, as I think, have disputed. For, whatever was attended with such pernicious Consequences, as to oblige their Brethren, either to live unmarried, which would prove the Extinction of their Tribe; or to marry the Daughters of *Heathens*, which was contrary to their divine Law, or to take to themselves Wives wherever they could find them by Force and Violence, which was contrary to the universal Law of Nations: Whatever, I say, was attended with such evil Consequences as these, could not be lawful in itself, nor of any Obligation to the Consciences of those that made it; and therefore it is somewhat wonderful, how the *Israelites*, when they found themselves involv'd in such Difficulties, (as (z) they themselves testify) that, for the Preservation of this their Oath, they were forc'd to have Recourse to Acts of the utmost Cruelty and Violence, did not perceive the Illegality of it, and themselves, consequently, absolv'd from its Observation.

The Murder of the Jabeshites.

It is not the Intent of the sacred Histo-

rian to relate Matters otherwise, than they happen'd; nor is it any Part of our Business, to apologize for Actions, that in themselves are abominable, and will admit of no Excuse. The Massacre of the People of *Jabesh-gilead*, without ever sending to know the Reason of their absenting themselves from the War, was a cruel Expedient to extricate the *Israelites* from a Difficulty, in which their superstitious Observance of an unlawful Oath had involv'd them; and a sad Instance it is of the Iniquity and Barbarity of these Times: For, how severe soever the Laws of military Discipline may be, or with (a) what Justice soever *Recusants*, as well as *Differers* in War may be deem'd guilty, and the *Jabeshites* be call'd publick Enemies, because they did not obey the Order of the whole Congregation, and by refusing to join with them against the *Benjamites*, made themselves Partakers of their Crimes; yet, certainly, to slay the Innocent with the Guilty, and to put Women and Children to Death, who were never made to bear Arms, was the very Height of Injustice and Barbarity. If it be said, that the *Cherem*, or the Sentence of utter Execration was pass'd upon them, I do not see, with what Justice the Virgins could be spar'd, (as we find they were by a publick Decree) unless we suppose, that God, from the Tabernacle at *Shiloh*, (before which the *Israelites* were now assembled) signify'd his Intentions of dispensing with the full Execution of the Sentence by Reason of the publick Necessity.

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of Ruth.

AND indeed the publick Necessity is the only good Reason, that can be given for that other Act of Violence, the Rape of the Virgins at *Shiloh*. For, whatever may be said in Vindication of the *Benjamites*, viz. that, what they put in Execution was by Order and Advice of their Superiors, and that their Intent in doing it was just and honest, and devoid of that brutal Lust, which is incident to common *Ravishers*; whatever may be said in Excuse of these, the Elders of *Israel*, who gave

The Rape of the Virgins at Shiloh, not to be defended.

(y) Vide *Calmet's Commentary*.

(z) *Judg. xxi. 6, &c.*

(a) *Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

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gave them this Counfel and Authority, had certainly no Right to difpofe of other People's Children without their Parents Confent and Approbation.

* THE Rape of the *Sabine Virgins* is usually produc'd as a Piece of History parallel to this; (b) but *Romulus*, in whose Reign it happen'd, was one of thofe Princes, who accounted every Point, that contributed to the Eftablifhment of his Dominion, not only lawful, but glorious, and that every Thing ceas'd to be a Crime, when once it became neceffary for *Reasons of State*: But the Rulers of *Israel* either had, or fould have had different Notions. They were govern'd by God, *whose Throne is eftablifhed in Righteoufnefs*, and fould therefore, one would think, have contriv'd fome other Means of re-efablifhing a diminifh'd Tribe, than thofe violent Ways of Rapes and forc'd Marriages. But the facred Historian has affign'd a Reason for thefe unrighteous Proceedings, when (in (c) four different Places in the Book of *Judges*) he tells us, that *in thofe Days there was no King in Israel*; and, (d) for Want of fuch a fupreme Authority, every Tribe, and every City, nay, which is more, every private Man committed many horrid Things, which were not publickly allow'd. This (e) was the Caufe of *Micah's* Idolatry, as we noted before; of the *Benjamites*

Filthinefs and abominable Lufts; and of all the enormous Things done by the main Body of the *Israelites*; their killing all the *Benjamites* without Difinction; their binding themfelves by rash and unlawful Oaths; their killing all the Women of *Jabesh-gilead*, who were not Virgins; and here, their permitting, nay, their ordering this Rape for the Prefervation of a rash and unjuftifiable Oath: And this fould teach us, to be very thankful for the Authority, that is fet over us, in order to prefferve us from the Comiffions of fuch like Enormities; for which End, the Custom was, among the antient *Persians*, (as our learned *Ufher* obferves) to let the People loofe to do even what they lifted, for five Days after their King died; that, by the Diforders, which were then committed, they might fee the Neceffity of having a King to govern them, and, when one was fettled in the Throne, the great Reason of being obedient to him.

THUS we have endeavour'd to clear up moft of the Paffages, in the Book of *Judges*, which feem to imply any Inconfiftency, or Incapability, during this Period: And, if any *Heathen Testimonies* may be thought a farther Confirmation of their Truth, we may fay, that the feeming Incongruity of *Shamgar's* faying fo many *Philiftines* with an Ox-Goad is mightily abated, by what is

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Heathen Testi-
monies, to cor-
roborate this
Part of the
History.

* This Piece of History we find thus related: " *Romulus*, perceiving that his new City was furrounded by feveral " very powerful and warlike Nations, who bore them no Good-Will, form'd a Design to make them his Friends, " by contracting Marriages with them: But confidering with himfelf, that thefe neighbouring Nations would hardly " enter into that Affinity with a People, as yet famous neither for their Riches, nor great Exploits, without being in " fome Meafure compell'd into it; he was resolv'd to put in Practice the Stratagem of his Uncle *Numitor*, and to " enter into this Alliance with them by carrying off their Daughters. This Design he communicated to the Senate; " and, having obtain'd their Approbation of it, he proclaim'd a publick Feaft to be celebrated in Honour of *Neptune*, " and invited all the neighbouring Cities to the many Diversions and Spectacles, which he then intended to exhibit. " Crowds of People, with their Wives and Children, flock'd to the Feaft; but, on the laft Day, when it began to " draw to a Conclusion, *Romulus* order'd all the young Men, that upon a Signal given, they fould feize and carry " off every one a Virgin, keep them all Night, without offering any Rudenefs to them, and bring them, the next " Morning, before him. The young Men took care to execute his Orders: For, difperffing themfelves into fmall " Companies, as foon as they faw the Sign, they feiz'd on the Damfels, who, upon this Occafion, made a hideous " Outcry, as expecting much worfe Ufage than they met with. The next Day, when they were brought before *Ro- " mulus*, he fpoke very courteoufly to them, and told them, That it was to do them no Difhonour, but merely to pro- " cure them Hufbands, that he order'd that Rape, which was an ancient Custom deriv'd from the *Greeks*, and the " moft noble and gallant Manner of contracting Marriage. He therefore intreated them to be well affeeted towards " thofe Hufbands, which Fortune had given them; and fo, diftributing the young Women, which were fix hundred " and eighty three, among an equal Number of unmarried Men, he difmiff'd them." *Dionyf. Halicarn. Antiq.* lib. ii. c. 21.

(b) *Saurin's* Differt. 18, Vol. IV.
Commentary.

(c) *Ibid.*

(d) Chap. xvii. 6. xviii. 1. xix. 1. and xxi. 25.

(e) *Patrick's*

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is told of *Lycurgus*, viz. that he overthrew the Forces of *Bacchus* with the self-same Weapon; that, from *Deborah's* being a Prophetess, a Governess, and dwelling upon a Mount, the Story of the *Thebean Sphinx* (as some learned Men imagine) was invented by the *Greeks*; that their *Hercules* was certainly the *Samson* of sacred Writ, his *Omphale* and *Dalilah* the same, and that his Pillars at *Cales* were of near Affinity with those of *Gaza*; * that his fatal Locks gave Rise to the Fable of *Nisus* King of *Megara*, upon whose Hair the Fortune of his Kingdom depended; that his Foxes

were commemorated at *Rome*, every Return of their Harvest, * by a similar Ceremony of tying them Tail to Tail, and so letting them go; and, (to name no more) that *Jephthah's* sacrificing his Daughter to God is partly adumbrated by *Agamemnon's* offering his *Iphigenia* to *Diana*, and partly by *Idomeneus's* promising to make a Victim to *Neptune* of the first Thing he should meet on Shore, (if he escap'd the present Storm) which happen'd to be his own Son. So happily do many Fictions of the Poets concur to confirm the Truth and Authority of Holy Writ.

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* The Story is thus told by *Ovid*. *Nisus* was besieg'd by *Minos* in his capital City *Megara*. The Fate of that City, which was the Strength of his Kingdom, depended upon a certain Lock of red Hair, which was conceal'd under the rest. The Siege had now been continu'd for six Months, when the Daughter of *Nisus*, who had frequent Opportunities of beholding her Father's Enemy *Minos*, from a Tower, that look'd into his Camp, was so taken with his goodly Mein and Deportment, that she fell desperately in Love with him. Her Love, and the Occasion of it, the Poet has thus related.

Hæc judice Minos,
Seu Caput abdiderat cristatâ Casside pennis,
In Galea firmosus erat; seu sumserat auro
Fulgentem Clypeum, Clypeum sumsisse decebat, &c.
Cum verò Faciem dempto nudaverat ære,
Purpureusque albi stratis insignia pictis
Terga premebat Equi, spumantiaque ora regebat;
Vix sua, Vix sanæ virgò Nisèia compos
Mentis erat: Felix jaculum, quod tangeret ille,
Quæque manu premeret, felicia fræna vocabat.

Metamor. Lib. viii.

The Result of this Passion was, that this perfidious Daughter stole into the Chamber, while her Father was fast asleep, cut off the Lock, whereon the Fate of his Kingdom depended, and carry'd it to *Minos*, as an undoubted Pledge of her Love. But if this Fable and *Samson's* History have a near Resemblance in some of their first Circumstances, they are very different in the Conclusion: For *Minos* rejected the Present with Scorn, and slighted the Woman, because of her Perfidy; whereas the Princes of the *Philistines* took the Advantage against *Samson*, which *Dalilah's* Treachery gave them. *Saurin*, Vol. IV. Dissert. 17.

* There was anciently a Feast in *Rome*, called *Vulpinalia*, or the Feast of the Foxes, which *Ovid* makes mention of. For, enquiring into the Custom of tying lighted Torches to their Tails,

Cur igitur missæ vinctis ardentia tædis
Terga ferant vulpes, causa docenda mihi.

he resolves the Matter, by telling us, that a certain Youth, having caught a Fox, which had destroy'd much Poultry, was going to burn it. His Words are these:

Captivam stipulâ Ecœnoque involvit, & ignes
Admovet: urentes effugit illa manus.
Quâ fugit, incendit vestitos messibus agros,
Damnosis vires ignibus Aura dabat.
Factum abiit: monumenta manent: nam vivete captam
Nunc quoque Lex vulpem Carseolana vetat.
Utque luat pœnas Gens hæc, Cerealibus ardet,
Quoque modo Segetes perdidit, ipsa perit.

Pastorum, Lib. iv.

But *Bochart* has confuted this Notion of *Ovid's*, concerning the Origin of this Custom, and endeavours to refer it to this Piece of History in *Samson's* Life. *Saurin*, Vol. IV. Dissert. 17.

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DISSERTATION II.

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JEPHTHAH'S *Rash Vow.*

The State of
the Question.

THIS Vow of *Jephthah's*, which has employ'd the Thoughts and Pens of so many learned Men, is conceiv'd in these Words: — *And Jephthah vowed a Vow unto the Lord, and said, if thou shalt without fail, deliver the Children of Ammon into my Hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth out of the Door of my House to meet me, when I return in Peace from the Children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a Burnt-Offering.* And the Result of this Vow was, — *That Jephthah passed over unto the Children of Ammon to fight against them, and the Lord delivered them into his Hands; whereupon he came to Mizpeth unto his House, and behold, his Daughter came out to meet him, with Timbrels, and Dances, and she was his only Child, besides her he had neither Son nor Daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his Cloaths, and said, Alas! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them, that trouble me; for I have opened my Mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My Father, if thou hast opened thy Mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that, which proceeded out of thy Mouth, forasmuch as the Lord has taken Vengeance for thee of thine Enemies, even of the Children of Ammon: Only let me alone two Months, that I may go up and down upon the Mountains, and bewail my Virginity, I, and my Fellows. And he said, go; and he sent her away for two Months, and she went with her Companions, and bewailed her Virginity upon the Mountains. And it came to pass, at the End of two Months, that she returned to her Father, who did with her according to his Vow, which he had vowed, and she knew no Man: And it was a Custom in Israel, that the Daughters of Israel went yearly to lament*

the Daughter of Jephthah, four Days in a Year. I set the whole Passage before the Reader, that he may the better judge of the depending Controversy; for a great Controversy there is among *Commentators*, whether this Daughter of *Jephthah's* was really sacrific'd, or no: And for his farther Satisfaction in this Point, I will fairly state the Arguments on both Sides; consider a little on which Side they preponderate; and then enquire, in Case he did sacrifice his Daughter, or (as others will have it) devote her only to God's Service in a single Life, whether the Thing was *lawful* for him to do, and what might possibly be the *Motive* of his doing it.

THOSE, (f) who maintain the *Negative*, or more merciful Side of the Question, argue in this Manner: — That *Jephthah* was certainly a very good Man, because we find him rank'd among the *Worthies* of old, that are commemorated with Honour by the Author of the *Hebrews*; That he was an *Israelite*, and, as such, liv'd under the Law, which prohibited *human Sacrifices* by the severest Penalties; That had the Vow been intended in this Sense, God would never have vouchsaf'd *Jephthah* so signal a Victory, as he did, which must have terminated in the Violation of his own Laws; and therefore they conclude, that so kind and tender a Father, as *Jephthah* is represented, would never have sacrific'd an innocent, dutiful, and obedient Child, as her whole Carriage seems to denote her, in Discharge of a rash and inconsiderate Vow; especially, when, according to the Prescription of the Law, he might have redeem'd his Daughter at a Price so inconsiderable, (g) as *ten Shékels of Silver*.

It must be something else therefore, say they, that *Jephthah* did unto his Daughter,

Arguments for
the Negative.

(f) *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries. *Jenkins's* Reasonableness, Vol. II. c. 18. *Selden, de Jure Nat. & Gent.* lib. iv. c. 11. *Howell's* History, &c.

(g) *Lev. xxvii. 5.*

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1443, &c.

ter, and that (according to the Import of the Text) was, to devote her to a State of *Celibacy*, or that she might live in the Manner of a religious *Nun* all the Days of her Life: For the Particle *Vab*, which we render AND (*it shall surely be the Lord's*, AND *I will offer it up*) is a *Disjunctive* in this Place, (as it is elsewhere) and signifies OR; so that the true Version of the Passage should be, *whatever cometh forth to meet me shall surely be the Lord's*, OR *I will offer it up for a Burnt-Offering*, i. e. if it be an human Creature, I will dedicate it to the Service of God; if a Beast, of any Kind proper for Sacrifice, I will instantly offer it up: For that in this Sense the Vow is to be understood, is evident, from her going into the Mountains to bewail her *Virginity*, which, had she been doom'd to be sacrific'd, had not been near so proper, as to bewail her *untimely End*. Nor can we think that *Jephthah* would have ever suffer'd her to have made a Circuit of two Months among her Companions, for fear of making her Escape, or procuring some of her Friends and Acquaintance either to rescue her, or intercede for her, had she been destin'd to suffer Death upon her Return.

ON the contrary, when she return'd to her Father, and *he had done to her according to his Vow*, it immediately follows, that *she knew not Man*, which shews that the Purpose of his Vow was answer'd by obliging her to a State of perpetual *Virginity*, in some retir'd Place, where she was secluded from all Society, except that the *Daughters of Israel* (those especially of her Acquaintance) went up, either to talk and converse with her, or to celebrate her Praise, or to comfort her concerning her solitary Condition, (for to all these Senses may the Word *Letannoth* be apply'd) *four Days in the Year*, i. e. one Day every Quarter.

UPON the whole therefore they infer, that *Jephthah's* Daughter did not fall a Sacrifice, but was consecrated to God and his Service, i. e. devoted to a single Life, and to remain a *Recluse* all her Days;

which could not but occasion *Jephthah* no small Grief and Trouble, because by this Means his Family became extinct, and himself destitute of Issue to inherit his Estate, and perpetuate his Name.

THESE are some of the most plausible Arguments, that are generally employ'd to prove, not the Sacrifice of *Jephthah's* Daughter, but only her Obligation to a perpetual *Virginity* in the Worship and Service of God.

THOSE, (b) that maintain the *Affirmative*, or harsher Side of the Question, viz. that *Jephthah*, in Pursuance to his Vow, did actually sacrifice his Daughter, form their Arguments in this Manner: — (i) That the Times, wherein *Jephthah* liv'd, were so sadly addicted to Idolatry, that (k) *to burn their Sons and Daughters in the Fire to their Gods* was a common Practice among the *Israelites*, as well as other Nations; and that the Manner, (l) in which he liv'd, (before he was call'd to the Assistance of his Country) which was chiefly by Plunder and Rapine, and Bloodshed, might make him not incapable of vowing to sacrifice the first of his *Domesticks*, that should meet him upon his victorious Return: That this Vow is deliver'd in general and indefinite Terms, viz. that *whatsoever should come forth of the Doors of his House to meet him*, That should *surely be the Lord's*, and it should be the Lord's, *by being offered up for a Burnt-Offering*: That, tho' the Particle *Vab* be sometimes us'd in a *disjunctive* Sense, yet it can only be so, where Things are really distinct and different from each other, but cannot be admitted, where the one manifestly includes the other, as it is in the Passage before us; that therefore it is much more congruous to all the Rules of good Sense to understand the Words of *Jephthah* so, as that, by promising *whatsoever he met should be the Lord's*, he oblig'd himself in general to consecrate it to God, and that, by promising farther, that *he would offer it up for a Burnt-Offering*,

From Judges
i. to the End
of Ruth.

And for the
Affirmative.

(b) Edwards's Enquiry into some remarkable Texts. Dissert. 15.

(l) Grotius in Locum, Calmet's Dissert. sur le Vœu de Japhet, & Saurin, de eodem, &c.

(i) Deut. xii. 31.

(k) Saurin, Vol. III.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.

Offering, he specify'd the Manner, in which he intended to make his Consecration.

Vows of perpetual Virginity, *say they*, are Institutions of a modern Date: The Word of God knows nothing of them; nor has this pretended Celibacy of *Jephthab's* Daughter any Manner of Foundation in Scripture; and therefore, when this Circumstance is inserted, that *she knew no Man*, it is not to signify, that she liv'd a perpetual Virgin, but only, that she was so unhappy, as to leave the World in her Youth, and before she had the Knowledge of a Man.

HAD *Jephthab* meant no more, *say they*, by performing his Vow, than consecrating his Daughter, as a perpetual Virgin, to the Service of God, what Cause was there for *renting his Cloaths*, and bemoaning himself, as we find he did? Had *Jephthab* made only a Vow of Celibacy for his Daughter, whereby she was bound to nothing more painful, than to lead a single Life, what Reason was there for bewailing *this*, as a grievous Calamity, which some Men account a Thing so eminently glorious and honourable? Is the being shut up as a *Recluse*, and enter'd into the List of perpetual Virgins, a Matter of such bitter Complaint and Lamentation? Was this so fore an Evil, an Affliction so extraordinary, that, not only before she underwent it, she and her Companions, should, for two Months together, be allow'd to bewail it; but that, after she had undergone it, the *Daughters of Israel* should be requir'd to lament it four Times a Year? (m) If she was *actually* put to Death, in Execution of her Father's Vow, it is easy then to understand, why the particular Circumstance of her dying without Issue (when *she was the only Daughter of her Father*, and had no other Prospect of Posterity to keep up his Family) should be represented as a sore Aggravation of her violent and untimely Death: But it seems very difficult to account for that bitter Lamentation,

made by her Father, by herself, by her Companions, and by all the Daughters of *Israel* in succeeding Times, if she suffer'd no other, no severer Punishment, than that of being devoted to a *single Life*. From Judges i. to the End of Ruth.

THESE are some of the most prevailing Arguments on the *affirmative* Side; and, for the Confirmation of them, it is farther alledg'd, that both *Josephus*, and the *Chaldee* Paraphrast testify the same Thing; that the Ancient Doctors, both of the *Jewish* and *Christian* Church, were of the same Opinion; and that, as to the Substance of the Fact, the Compilers of the *Homilies* of our Church do perfectly agree with these ancient Writers: So that, how desirous soever we may be to clear *Jephthab* from the Imputation of so cruel, so impious, so unnatural an Act, as that of murdering his own Daughter; yet, if we will adhere to the more easy and obvious Construction of the Words, and as they appear to us at first View; or if we retain any just Esteem and Veneration for the Sense of Antiquity, we must necessarily conclude, that, when it is said of him, that *he did with his Daughter according to the Vow, which he had vowed*, the Meaning can be no less, than that he did really put her to Death: But whether he acted well or ill in so doing, is another Enquiry we are now to pursue.

THE Law of *Cherem*, (as the *Hebrews* call it) which is a Law of a peculiar Nature, is deliver'd in these Words; (n) *No devoted Thing, which a Man shall devote to the Lord, of all that he hath, both of Man and Beast, and of the Field of his Possession, shall be sold, or redeemed; every devoted Thing is most holy to the Lord. None devoted, which shall be devoted by Men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to Death.* Of this Sort a very learned (o) Commentator supposes this Vow of *Jephthab's* to have been, and that therefore he could not redeem his Daughter, but was necessitated to put her to Death. It is to be observ'd however, that (p) *Cherem* (which is the Term

(m) Bishop *Smalridge's* Sermons.
Jephthae.

(n) Levit. xxvii. 28, 29.

(p) *Edward's* Enquiry into several Texts.

(o) Lud. Cappel. Diatr. de Voto

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.

Term here made use of) signifies either Persons devoted to Slaughter for their execrable Impieties, (as were the *Amalekites*, and other Nations, whom God commanded the *Israelites* to extirpate) or Things destin'd to Destruction (as were *Jericho* and *Ai*) for the Wickedness of those to whom they appertain'd: So that the Law of *Cherem* related only to such Persons or Things, as, by an irrevocable Vow, were destin'd to utter Destruction for their horrid Crimes, and because indeed there was particular Command from God, both for the making, or putting such a Vow in Execution: But it can by no Means be pretended, either that *Jephthah's* Daughter merited such a Punishment, or that her Father had any Order or Commission from God to inflict it. On the contrary, all human Sacrifices are expressly forbidden, as odious and detestable to God: (q) *Thou shalt not do so to the Lord thy God; thou shalt not burn thy Sons, and thy Daughters in the Fire, as the Heathens us'd to do to their Gods; for every Abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done.*

THERE is one Law indeed, which seems to be of some Moment in the Case before us, and that is this: — (r) *If a Man vow a Vow unto the Lord, or swear an Oath to bind his Soul with a Bond, he shall not break his Word, he shall do, according to all that proceedeth out of his Mouth.* But then all sober *Casuits* are agreed, that a Vow has only a *constructive*, not a *destructive* Force, i. e. that it can only lay a *new* Obligation, where there is none, or where there is one, *strengthen* it; but that it cannot cancel a former Obligation, or superinduce one, that is repugnant to it. Now all our Obligations to Obedience proceed from God. (s) He has an uncontrollable Right to give Laws to his Creatures: But if Men, by entering into Vows, could free themselves from the Obligation of his Laws, they might then, whenever they pleas'd, by their own Act defeat

his Authority. Whatever therefore is in itself forbidden by God, and for that Reason unlawful; whatever is against any Precept of *natural* or *reveal'd* Religion; whatever is inconsistent with those *relative* Duties, which Men owe to one another; whatever, in short, is, in any Respect, sinful, cannot, by being made the Matter of a Vow, become justifiable. So that he, who hath vowed to do what cannot be done without Sin, is so far from being oblig'd to perform his Vow, that he is, notwithstanding his Vow, oblig'd not to perform it; because there is not only great Obliquity in making such an unlawful Vow, but this Obliquity is so far from being lessen'd, that it is aggravated by keeping it.

(t) SINCE therefore the Thing vow'd by *Jephthah* seems to have been in itself unlawful; since his Daughter was innocent, and had done nothing to deserve Death; since the running out to meet her Father, with Joy and Congratulation, was an Act of Piety, which seem'd to entitle her to his Love and Favour; since the natural Affection of a Father towards his Child must be stifled, before he could give Way to the Execution of the Sentence of Death upon her; since the sacrificing of Children to their Gods was a Crime, for which the *heathen* Nations were justly detested, and punish'd by God; since *Jephthah's* offering his Daughter as a Victim to the Lord, might reflect a Dishonour upon the true God, as if he also delighted in such Sacrifices; since these, I say, and several other Things, might be urg'd in Aggravation of this Action, we may safely and confidently aver, (u) with the *Jewish* Historian, *that the Sacrifice, which Jephthah offered, was neither lawful, nor acceptable to God, but, on the contrary, a very impious Act, and an abominable Crime, tho' it might possibly proceed from a mistaken Principle of Religion.*

THE religious Observation of Oaths and Vows has, at all Times, been esteem'd a Duty

From Judges
i. to the End
of Ruth.

But from what
Motives he
might think
himself oblig'd
to do it.

8 L

(q) Deut. xii. 31.
pbui's Antiq. lib. v. c. 9.

(r) Numb. xxx. 2.

(s) Bishop *Sambridge's* Sermons.

(t) Ibid.

(u) *Jose-*

A. M.
2561. &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443. &c.

Duty incumbent on those that made them ; infomuch that, even when they have been procur'd by *Guile*, they have not been thought destitute of their Obligation. The *Gibeonites* certainly impos'd upon the Children of *Israel*, when they obtain'd from them a League of Amity and Friendship ; and yet we may observe what Notions the *Israelites* had of this Kind of Obligation, when, in their publick Consultations, they say, (x) *We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel ; now therefore we may not touch them.* This was a remarkable Instance before *Jephthah's* Days, and 'tis not improbable that he might have it in his Remembrance, and imprudently make use of it, as a *Precedent* of the Irreversibleness of Oaths, and of the inviolable Tye he was under by Reason of his Vow : But, in succeeding Times, there is a Passage in Scripture, which comes nearer to the Case now before us. *Saul*, in the Day of Battle, perceiving his Enemies to give Ground, out of the Abundance of his Zeal made a Vow to God, that whoever should taste any Food before the Pursuit was over, should certainly die ; and, upon this Occasion, his own Son *Jonathan* had like to have been made a Sacrifice, merely because the Father would have been thought religious and austere in the Observation of his Oath ; notwithstanding he was plainly excus'd from the Obligation of it as to his Son, who was both in another Place, and ignorant of his Father's Will, and under a Necessity of taking some small Refreshment, when he was so faint and hungry. What Wonder then if *Jephthah*, who, we have Reason to believe, was a Person much more religiously inclin'd than *Saul*, should think himself under an Obligation to observe his Vow, even tho' it was to the Destruction of his own and only Daughter ?

WHAT the Acceptableness of *Abraham's* offering his Son *Isaac* was, he had read in the Book of *Moses* ; and this might possibly lessen the Horror of the Fact he was going

to commit. For, tho' *Abraham* had the positive Command of God for what he did, which *Jephthah* could not pretend to, so that there was a great Disparity between their two Cases ; yet it was plain, from the Acceptableness of *Abraham's* Offering, and the great Reward bestow'd on him for his intended Oblation, that the sacrificing a beloved Child was not, in all Cases, and under all Circumstances, sinful, but might be so *circumstantiated*, as to be an Act of Piety, and approv'd in the Sight of God : And, when this Example prov'd such an Action, (as to the Matter and Substance of it) not only lawful, but commendable, *Jephthah* might from hence be led into an Opinion, that the Difference between his Case, and that of *Abraham*, was not so great, as that what was laudable and almost *meritorious* in the one, should be imputed as an unpardonable Crime to the other.

HE had read likewise in the Law, that (y) *when thou shalt vow a Vow unto the Lord, thou shalt not be slack to pay it ;* and was sensible, that a wilful Neglect of this was an heinous Crime, (z) a Mocking of God, a Dissembling with Heaven, and an Act of Injustice and Unfaithfulness towards him, who is a severe *Exactor* of Vows, and is wont to avenge the Breach of them by the Infliction of the sorest Punishments ; and upon these *Premises* he might possibly argue with himself in this Manner, “ Tho' I know that the Performance of
“ my Vow will be accompany'd with
“ Murther, yet I consider likewise, that
“ my not performing it will be attended
“ with downright *Perjury*. Seeing then
“ there is a Necessity of sinning one Way
“ or other, I am resolv'd to chuse the
“ former ; for tho' that be an Injury to
“ my Daughter, yet the other is an Affront
“ to God. My Child is dear to me indeed,
“ but my God, my Father, is much
“ more so. 'Tis better therefore to be
“ cruel, than *impious* ; to be guilty of
“ Bloodshed, than to be perjur'd, and
“ false to the Lord of Heaven and Earth.

“ *I have*

From Judges
i. to the End
of Ruth.

(x) Josh. ix. 19.

(y) Deut. xxiii. 21.

(z) *Edward's* Enquiry into several Texts.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.

" *I have opened my Mouth unto the Lord,*
" *and I cannot go back.* I must not re-
" verse, I dare not revoke the sacred
" Promise, which I have made to the
" Almighty; but my firm and unshaken
" Purpose is to perform it." Thus the
mistaken Sense of the indissoluble Obliga-
tion, which his Vow had laid upon him,
blinded his Eyes, and ran him upon this
fatal Rock.

HE could not but know, (had he confi-
der'd at all) that no Vow is *obligatory*,
where the Matter of it is unlawful; or
that, what is unlawful in itself, cannot
possibly be made otherwise by the Inter-
position of a Vow. Nay, he could not
but know, that to Act unlawfully, in
Virtue of a Vow, was a *double Sin*, since
not only the Vow itself was sinful, but the
Act, consequent thereupon, was sinful
likewise; and yet so blind sometimes is
the Zeal of an *erroneous* Conscience, that
it will not suffer Men to perceive, at least
to be govern'd by the most rational and
self-evident Principles.

UPON the whole therefore we may
conclude, that, how great soever this Sin
of *Jephthah's* was, yet (properly speaking)
it was the Sin of *Ignorance*, and the Effect
of a misguided Conscience. By the bitter
Complaint, which he utter'd upon the
first Sight of his Daughter coming out to
meet him, it is evident, that he was under
great Trouble and Perplexity; and, as
she had done nothing to alienate his Affec-
tions from her, but, in this very Act of
meeting him, had done something to
engage his Affections more strongly towards
her, the Bowels of a Father must necessa-
rily yearn to save the Life of a loving and
a beloved Child. The generous Offer,
which she made him, that he might do to
her whatever he pleas'd, *according to his*
Vow, tho' it made the doing of it less
unjust, could not but add a fresh Sting
to his Grief, and, if he had any Generosity
in his Breast, make him do it with more
Reluctancy. No one, who is a Parent;
no one, who has felt the Workings of Na-

ture towards his own Issue; no one, who
hath suffer'd, or who hath fear'd the Loss
of an only Child, but must be sensible,
what Pangs of Sorrow, what Meltings of
Compassion, what Agonies of Grief must
pierce the Soul of *Jephthah*, when he
imagin'd himself under the sad Necessity of
sacrificing his own, his only, his Virgin-
Daughter, whom he could not offer up
for a Burnt-Offering, without sacrificing
at the same Time, all the Propensions of
Nature, all the Ease and Pleasure of his
Life, all the Prospect of keeping up his
Family. Nothing less than a mistaken
Opinion of the indispensable Obligation of
his Vow could prevail with him, thus to
over-rule the strong Motives of Interest
and Inclination; and a Mistake, which
took its Rise from so good a Principle,
must, without Question, at least extenuate
the Guilt, in the Judgment both of good-
natur'd Men, and of an All-merciful
God.

WE cannot however part with this
remarkable Piece of History, without
making one Inference; *viz.* that we
should be strictly careful how we engage
ourselves in any rash and indeliberate Vows;
because, as a Vow is confessedly an Act of
Religion, when once *we have opened our*
Mouths unto the Lord, we cannot, with-
out manifest Prevarication and Contempt
of God's Authority, *go back*. And there-
fore, (to conclude in the Words of a great
(a) Divine already quoted upon this Sub-
ject) " as in *civil* Life, Men of the best
" Character for Integrity, and such as are
" most punctual in keeping their Words,
" are observ'd to be very sparing in making
" Promises; so in Religion, the best Way
" we can take to observe the Precept
" given us by *Solomon*, (b) *that when we*
" *vow a Vow unto God, we should not*
" *defer to pay it*, will be in the first Place
" to observe another Precept, which he
" lays down before this, *viz.* that (c)
" *we should not be rash with our Mouths,*
" *nor let our Hearts be hasty to utter any*
" *Thing before God.*"

C H A P.

(a) *Smalridge's Sermons.*(b) *Ecclef. v. 4.*(c) *Ibid. ver. 2.*

From Judges
i. to the End
of Ruth.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End



C H A P. III.

From the Birth of SAMUEL, to the Death of SAUL.

The HISTORY.

Samuel's Birth
and Parentage.

DURING the Time of *Samson's* great Exploits, both the *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical* Administration seems to have been in the Hands of *Eli* the High-Priest, in the Beginning of whose Government *Samuel* was born. He was the Son of *Elkanah*, a *Levite* who dwelt in *Ramah* †, a City belonging to the Tribe of *Ephraim*, and (as the Custom of those Times was) had two Wives, whose Names were *Hannah*, and *Peninnah*. * Thrice every Year he us'd to go to *Shiloh*, there to offer up his usual Sacrifice, and, as he was a pious and religious Man, he generally took his two Wives with him, that they in like

Manner might make their Oblations. Now *Hannah*, tho' she had no Children, was his favourite Wife, and therefore, at † every Feast upon the *Peace-Offering*, he usually sent her a separate Mess, and of the choicest of the Meat; which the other perceiving, was wont to † upbraid her with her *Sterility*, or Want of Children. *Hannah* took this so sore to Heart, that all the kind Things, which her Husband said to her, could not assuage or comfort her; but, as soon as she rose from Table, away she hastens to the Tabernacle, and there *pours out her Soul before God*, desiring of him to bless her with a Son, which Favour

† *Ramah* signifies an *Eminence*, or high Situation, and is therefore an Appellation given to several Places, that are built in this Manner. This is said to have stood upon Mount *Ephraim*, thereby to distinguish it from other Towns, in different Tribes, of the same Denomination; and the Reason why it is here called *Ramathaim*, in the *Dual* Number, is, (as some imagine) because it was built upon two Hills, which made it appear as a double City, and, because it was situated on high, and had a Watch-Tower built in it, it therefore had the Title of *Zophim* added to it. It stood upon the Road, that led from *Samaria* to *Jerusalem*; and, for this Reason, as well as its advantageous Situation, *Baasha*, King of *Israel*, caus'd it to be fortify'd, that there might be no Passage out of the Land of *Judah* into that of *Israel*, (1 Kings xv. 17. and 2 Chron. xvi. 1.) but in St *Jerom's* Days, it was no more than a small Village. Here it was that *Samuel* pass'd a great Part of his Time; for his Mother's Dedication of him to the Service of God did not confine him to *Shiloh*, after that God had called him out to a publick Employ, and appointed him his Residence in a Place, more convenient for the Execution of it. The Truth is, after the Captivity of the Ark, and the Death of *Eli*, all religious Ceremonies seem to have ceas'd at *Shiloh*; for which Reason it is said, that *Samuel* built an Altar at *Ramah*, the Place of his Residence, to the Intent that the People might resort to him, either to receive Judgment, or to offer Sacrifices, which, tho' it was contrary to the Law of *Moses*, seem'd to be a *Case of Necessity*; because the *Ark* being at one Place, and the *Tabernacle* at another, neither of them could properly be resorted to, either for sacrificing, or any other Part of publick Worship. *Patrick's*, *Le Clerc's*, and *Calmet's* Commentaries, and Universal History.

* The Precept is exactly thus, — *Three Times in the Year all thy Males shall appear before the Lord thy God*, (Exod. xxiii. 17.) which were at the Feast of the Passover, the Pentecost, and that of the Tabernacles; but Women were exempted from this Attendance, and therefore it was an extraordinary Act of Piety for *Elkanah* to take his two Wives with him.

† The Blood of this *Peace-Offering* was shed at the Foot of the Altar, the Fat was burnt, the Breast and right Shoulder was the Priest's *Perquisite*, and all the rest belong'd to the Person, who brought the Victim. With this he made a *Feast of Charity*, to which he called his Friends and Relations, and, in several Places of Scripture, God reminds him to invite the *Levite*, the Poor, the Fatherless, and the Widow. *Calmet's* Commentary.

† Sterility was look'd upon among the *Jeaus* as one of the greatest Misfortunes, that could befall any Woman; in-
fomuch that to have a Child, tho' the Mother immediately died thereupon, was accounted a less Affliction, than to have none at all. And to this Purpose we may observe, that the Midwife comforts *Rachel* in her Labour, even tho' she knew her to lie at the Point of Death, in these Terms, *Fear not, for thou shalt have this Son also*, Gen. xxxv. 17. *Saurin*, in Vol. IV. Dissert. 17.

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1116, &c.

Favour if he would grant her, she promis'd to make him a *Nazarite*, and, all the Days of his Life, devote him to his Service.

HER Prayers were heard, and, in a proper Time she conceiv'd, and brought forth a Son, whom she call'd *Samuel*, even because she had *asked him of the Lord*, (for so his Name imports) and, after he was grown to a competent Age, she brought him to *Shiloh*, and, in a very joyful and thankful Manner, presented him to *Eli*, who gladly receiv'd him, and immediately cloath'd him with a proper Habit, even with a Linnen * *Ephod*, that he might attend on the Service of the *Tabernacle*.

Eli's remiss
Government.
The Death of
his two Sons,
Himself, and
Daughter-in-
Law.

E L I himself was a very good Man, but by much too indulgent to his Children. He had two Sons *Hophni* and *Phineas*, who were mere *Libertines*. They domineer'd over the Men, and debauch'd the Women at their Devotions; and so far were they from being content with the Portion, which God had allotted them as Priests, that they forc'd from the People (even before they had made their *Oblations*) what Part of the Sacrifice they pleas'd; which gave so general a Disgust, that Religion grew into Contempt, and the Worship of God came to be disus'd.

E L I was not unacquainted with his Sons ill Conduct; but, instead of chasti-

zing them as his Authority requir'd, he contented himself with reprov'g them now and then, but that, in such gentle and mild Terms, as rather encourag'd than deterr'd them from proceeding in their wicked Practices; till at length, God, being provok'd with this his *Remissness*, † sent a Prophet to threaten him, and his Family with utter Destruction; to upbraid him with his Ingratitude, in slighting the *sacerdotal* Honour, which he had conferr'd on him; to foretel the Death of his two Sons both in one Day, † the Removal of his Priesthood into another and better Family, and the extreme Poverty, which his Posterity would fall into, upon their Ejection from the *sacerdotal* Office: Not was it long before God discover'd the same heavy Judgments to *Samuel*, which was the first Revelation he made to this young Prophet, and which *Eli* (when he was told it) receiv'd with a Mind fully resign'd to the divine Pleasure; (a) *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.*

IN these Days † there were but few *Prophets*, and *Revelations* were very scarce; and therefore, when the *Israelites* perceiv'd by the Truth of his Predictions, that God had appointed *Samuel* to the *prophetick* Office, they were not a little rejoic'd: And it was from the great Expectations, they

* The *Ephod* which the High Priest wore (as we have describ'd it elsewhere, page 474.) was a very rich Habit indeed, *Exod. xxviii. 6.* but there were other Kinds of *Ephods*, which not only Priests and *Levites*, but even Laymen, upon some Occasions, wore, as we find in the Instance of *David*, *2 Sam. vi. 14.* which was not a *sacred*, but an *honorary* Garment, (as we may call it) and such as the High-Priest might order *Samuel* to wear, to distinguish him from some other inferior Officers belonging to the *Tabernacle*. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† Who this Prophet was, Commentators are at a Loss to know. Some imagine, that it was *Phineas*, the Son of *Eleazar*; but *Phineas* very probably was dead long before this Time. Others therefore will needs have it to have been *Elkanah*, *Samuel's* Father; and some *Samuel* himself: But we no where read, that the Father was endu'd with the Spirit of Prophecy, and the Son was certainly then too young, and unacquainted with the Voice of God. The safest Way therefore is, to own our Ignorance of what the sacred Historian hath not thought proper to discover to us. *Calmel's Commentary.*

† The High-Priesthood was originally settl'd upon *Eleazar*, the Son of *Aaron*, by a Divine Decree; but that Decree being conditional only, 'tis reasonable to presume, that there was some great Offence or other in *Eleazar's* Family, (tho' not recorded in Scripture) which provok'd God to remove it into the Family of *Ithamar*, who was *Aaron's* youngest Son, and from whom *Eli* descended; and here, for the abominable Practices of his Sons, which he was too negligent to restrain, God threatens to translate the Priesthood back again, from the Family of *Ithamar*, to that of *Eleazar*, which accordingly happen'd in the Reign of King *Solomon*, who depos'd *Abiathar*, the last of *Eli's* Line from the *Pontificate*, and set up *Zadock* in his Stead. *Pool's Annotations.*

(a) 1 Sam. iii. 18.

† Whatever Revelations God might impart to some pious Persons privately, there was at this Time none publicly acknowledg'd for a Prophet, unto whom the People might resort to know the Mind of God; nay, so little acquainted were these Ages with the prophetick Spirit, that we read of no more than two Prophets, *Judg. iv. 4.* and *vi. 8.* in all the Days of the Judges. *Patrick's Commentary.*

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they had of God's Favour in renewing this Order of Men among them, that they took up Arms, in order to rescue themselves from the *Philistines* Yoke. The Army of the *Israelites* encamp'd at a Place, which was afterwards called * *Eben-ezer*, and that of the *Philistines* at *Aphek*, a City of *Judah*; but when they came to join Battle, the *Israelites* were defeated with the Loss of four Thousand Men.

THE Reason of this Defeat was imputed by some to their Want of the Ark in the Army, which, as the *Symbol* of God's Presence, would be a sure Means of Success; and therefore they sent to *Hophni* and *Phineas* to bring it with them, and, when it arriv'd in the Camp, receiv'd it with many a joyful Acclamation. The *Philistines*, at first, were dispirited at the News, as much as their Enemies were animated: But, at length taking Heart, and exhorting one another to act courageously, they repuls'd the *Israelites*, when they came to attack them; and, having

slain thirty Thousand of their Foot, (among whom were *Hophni* and *Phineas*): they routed the rest, and put them all to Flight, so that the *Ark of the Lord* fell into their Hands.

THIS ill News a Soldier of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, escaping from the Field of Battle, brought to *Shiloh* that very Day, with the usual Emblems of extreme Sorrow, * his Clothes rent, and Earth upon his Head; and then there was no small Outcry and Lamentation in the City. *Eli*, enquiring the Cause of it, had the Soldier brought before him, who gave him an Account, * that the *Israelites* were routed, his two Sons slain, and the Ark taken. *Eli* heard the Defeat of the Army, and the Death of his Sons with Courage and Unconcern enough; but, when he came to understand, that the Ark of the Lord was fallen into the Enemy's Hand, his Spirits forsook him, and, being both heavy and aged he fell from his Seat, and broke his Neck and died, after he had been the supreme

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

The Captivity
of the Ark,
and the Wonders
it did until
it was sent
home.

* This Place is here mention'd *prophetically*; for it had not this Name till about twenty Years after, 1 Sam. iv. 1. when *Samuel* fought with the *Philistines*, and gave them a total Overthrow, and set up a Monument of his Victory (for the proper Name signifies *the Stone of Help*) in the Field of Battle, which lay on the North Border of *Judah*, not far from *Mizpeh*; and *Aphek*, where the *Philistines* encamp'd, must not be far distant from it. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. III.

* If we consult *Josh. vii. 6.* *Job ii. 12.* and *Ezek. xxvii. 30.* we shall find, that this was the Manner of Mens expressing their deep Sorrow for any great Calamity that had befallen them. And, accordingly, we find *Virgil* representing *Latinus* rending his Clothes, and throwing Dust upon his grey Hairs, when he laments his private and publick Calamities:

It scissâ veste Latinus
Canitiem immundo infusam pulvere turpans.

Æneid 12.

* Who this *Benjamite* was, that brought the ill News to *Shiloh* of the Loss of the Battle, the History is silent, and the Conjecture of some *Jews*, that it probably was *Saul*, is very uncertain and precarious: But there is something very remarkable in the Account which he gives of the Action. The Words are these: — And *Eli* said to the *Benjamite*, *What is there done in the Battle, my Son? And the Messenger answer'd and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great Slaughter among the People, and thy two Sons, Hophni and Phineas, are dead, and the Ark of God is taken*, 1 Sam. iv. 16, 17. *Madam Dacier* highly commends the Manner, wherein the sacred Historian makes this Messenger speak, and compares these Words, *Hophni and Phineas are dead, and the Ark of the Lord is taken*, with those of *Antilocus* to *Achilles*, when he tells him the sad News, —

Κεῖται Πατρόκλος νέκυσ δὲ δὴ ἀμφιμάχοντα
Γυμνὸν ἀπαρ τὰ γὰρ τεύχε' ἔχει κορυθαίολος Ἕκτωρ.

Iliad 18.

Whereupon she quotes the Glossary, which *Eustathius* has upon this Passage in *Homer*. This Speech of *Antilocus* (says that excellent Critick) affords us a Pattern, with what Brevity such melancholy News should be related: For, in two Verses, it comprises every Thing that happen'd, the Death of *Patroclus*, the Person who slew him, the Encounter about his Body, and his Arms in the Possession of his Enemy. The Greek Tragick Poets have not been so wise as to imitate this; and, of all others, *Euripides*, who, upon the most doleful Occasion, is so apt to make long Recitals, is most egregiously defective herein. *Homer* is the only Author, that deserves to be follow'd. Nothing is more ridiculous, than to hear a Messenger, when he is to report some very bad News, running into tedious Circumstances, and pathetick Expressions. All he talks is not minded: For he, to whom he addresses himself, cannot attend to what he says: the first Word that acquaints him with the Misfortune, makes him deaf to every Thing else. *Saurin*, Vol. IV. Dissert. 23.

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supreme Magistrate in *Israel* * for the Space of forty Years: And (what was a farther Family-Misfortune) his Son *Phineas* had a Wife, then big with Child and near her Time, who, hearing of her Father's and Husband's Death, and (what was the worst of all) of the Captivity of the Ark, fell in Labour at the News, and being deliver'd of a Son, had just Strength to name him *Johabod*, (i. e. no Glory) before she died; because *the Ark*, which was the *Glory of Israel*, (as she assigns the Reason) *was departed from them*.

THE *Philistines*, having thus got Possession of the Ark, * carry'd it in Triumph

to one of their principal Cities, nam'd *Ashdod*; and there plac'd it in the Temple of their God *Dagon* hard by his Image. The next Morning the People of * *Ashdod*, going into the Temple, found *Dagon* fallen down upon his Face before the Ark; but, supposing this to be an Accident, they set him up again, and again; next Morning, found him not only fallen down, but his Head and the Palms of his Hands broken off, and lying upon the Threshold; whence there arose a superstitious Use among the *Philistines*, that neither Priest nor People would ever † tread upon a Threshold.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

By

* The *Septuagint*, and some antient Manuscripts, make the Term of *Eli's* Magistracy to be no more than twenty Years; and, to reconcile this with the *Hebrew* Text, some suppose, either that he had *Samson* join'd in the Government with him for the first twenty Years of his Administration, or his Sons, for the last; but there is no Reason for the Solution of a Difficulty, which arises from nothing else, but a Fault in the Text of the *Septuagint*. *Calmel's* Commentary.

* It was a Custom among the *Heathens*, to carry in Triumph the Images of the Gods of such Nations, as they had vanquish'd. *Isaiab* prophesies of *Cyrus*, that in this Manner he would treat the Gods of *Babylon*: ——— *Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth; their Idols were upon the Beasts, and upon the Cattel, — and themselves are gone into Captivity*, *Isaiab* xlv. 1, 2. *Daniel* foretels of *Ptolomy Energetes*, that he would carry captive into Egypt the Gods of the Syrians, with their Princes, *Dan.* xi. 8. And the like Predictions are to be met with in *Jeremiah*, xlviii. 7. and in *Amos* i. 15. We need less wonder therefore, that we find *Plutarch*, in the Life of *Marcellus*, telling us, that he took away, out of the Temples of *Syracuse*, the most beautiful Pictures and Statues of their Gods; and, that, afterwards, it became a Reproach to *Marcellus*, and rais'd the Indignation of other Nations against *Rome*, “ That he carry'd “ along with him, not Men only, but the very Gods captive, and in Triumph.” *Saurin*, Vol. IV. Dissert. 24.

* The *Philistines* were Descendants from *Mizraim*, the Father of the *Egyptians*, and so, in all Probability, having their first Settlement in *Egypt*, or the Parts adjoining, lay to the South-West of the Land of *Canaan*. In Process of Time however, they made Inroads upon *Canaan*, and, in *Abraham's* Days, had got Possession of a good Part of the Territories, which lay along the western Coasts of the *Mediterranean-Sea*. This Tract of Ground was divided into five Principalities, or little Kingdoms, viz. *Gaza*, *Askelon*, *Ashdod*, *Gath*, and *Akron*; which, for the better understanding of some Particulars related of the Ark, during its Stay in this Country, it will not be improper to describe all together. The City of *Gaza* (from which the Territory took its Name) stood, as it were, on the very South-West Angle, or Corner of the Land of *Canaan*; but of this Place we have spoken before. To the North of *Gaza* lay next the City of *Askelon*, called by the *Greeks*, *Ascalon*, and of great Note among the *Gentiles* for a Temple dedicated to *Dirceto*, the Mother of *Semiramis*, who was here worshipp'd in the Form of a *Mermaid*. To the North of *Ascalon* lay *Ashdod*, called by the *Greeks*, *Azotus*, and famous for the Temple of the God *Dagon*, whereof we have taken Notice before. Still more to the North lay *Gath*, memorable for being the Birth-Place of the Giant *Goliath*, whom *David* slew, and of several others of the same gigantick Race. It was dismantled by *Ozias*, King of *Judah*, and finally laid waste by *Hazael*, King of *Syria*: However it recover'd itself, and retain'd its old Name, in the Days of *Eusebius*, and *St Jerom*, who place it about four Miles from *Eleutheropolis*, in the Way to *Lidda*. The most Northern of these Cities, still upon the Coast of the *Mediterranean-Sea*, was *Ekron*, called by the *Greeks*, *Accaron*, a Place of great Wealth and Power, and famous for the idolatrous Worship of *Beelzebub*, who had here a celebrated Temple and Oracle. But of this Idol we shall have occasion to say more, when we come to the Reign of *Abaziah*, King of *Judah*, who sent in his Illness to consult him. *Wells's* Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. II.

† It is somewhat strange, that when the *Philistines* saw their *Dagon* cast down before the Ark of God, with his Head and Hands broken off, they should not thence infer, that he was no more than a vain Idol: But instead of that, we find them honouring the very Threshold, whereby he receiv'd these *Blows*, as if they had been consecrated, or some Divinity infus'd into them, from the mere Touch of this Idol. This is a sore Instance of Blindness and Insatiation; but it is no more, than what other *Heathen* Nations fell into. For, whether the Custom took its first Rise from this Practice of the *Philistines*, or no, 'tis certain, that among the *Romans*, the Threshold was consecrated to the Goddess *Vesta*, and those, which belong'd to Temples, were always held in the highest Veneration, as appears from *Juvenal*. ———

Tarpeium Limen adora.

Sat. 6.

and that other Passage in *Tibullus*, ———

Non ego, si merui, dubitem procumbere Templis,

Et dare Sacratæ Oscula Liminibus.

Lib. I. Eleg. 5.

Nay,

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By this Means the People of *Ashdod* could not but perceive, that their *Dagon* was far inferior to the God of *Israel*, who, to make them still more sensible of this, smote them, and the Inhabitants of the Places adjacent, with *Emerods*, and destroy'd the Fruits of their Grounds with Swarms of *Mice*; so that (to redress their Complaints) the Princes of the *Philistines* order'd the Ark to be remov'd to *Gath*, where the same Judgments befel the People of that Place; and, when from thence it was carry'd to *Ekron*, not only the † Plague of the *Emerods*, but a wasting Pestilence likewise, went along with it; so that the People were resolv'd to send it away, and to that Purpose, call'd their Priests together to advise with them in what Manner they might best do it.

THE Priests advis'd them to provide a new Cart, and to yoke to it two milch

Kine, that had never drawn before, but to keep up their Calves confin'd. In this Cart they order'd them to place the *Ark*, and (because it was proper to make some *Trespass-Offering* to the God of *Israel*) to have five * golden *Emerods*, and as many golden *Mice* (according to the Number of the principal Cities of the *Philistines*) made, and put in a Coffer by the Side of the Ark. But, above all, they caution'd them to take Notice, which Way the * Kine went; for, if they took towards *Judea*, they might conclude that these Judgments were of the God of *Israel's* Infliction, if any other Way, they might look upon them only as common *Accidents*.

WHEN all Things were thus got ready, the Kine were let go; and, taking the Road which led to *Bethshemeth*, in the Way to *Judea*, they went lowing along until

Nay, at this very Day, there are some *Mosques* in *Persia*, whose Thresholds are cover'd over with Plates of Silver, and which the People are not allow'd to tread on; for that is a Crime, which cannot be expiated without undergoing very severe Pains and Penalties. *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The Word *Apholim*, which only occurs here, and in the xxviiith Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, is, by different Interpreters, suppos'd to signify different Things. Some take it for a *Dysentery*, others for what they call *Procidencia Ani*; some for a *Cancer*, and others for something *Venerical* in that Part. The Scripture tells us expressly, that God smote his Enemies in the hinder Parts, *Psal. lxxviii. 66*. And therefore our Translation is not amiss, which supposes their Malady to have been such painful Tumours in the Fundament, as very frequently turn into *Ulcers*. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

* It was a prevailing Opinion among the *Heathens*, that the only Way to appease their Gods, when offended at them, was to offer them Presents; —

Munera, crede mihi, capiunt hominesque Deosque,

Placatur Donis Jupiter ipse datis.

OVID, de Arte, Lib. iii.

and therefore no Wonder that the *Philistines* Priests hit upon this Thought: And why they sent, along with the Ark, the Images of the Parts, which were afflicted with this sore Disease, might proceed from a common Custom likewise among the *Heathens*, of consecrating to their Gods such Monuments of their Deliverance, as represented the Evils from whence they had escaped, or the Members, which had been disorder'd. Thus the People of *Athens*, having been afflicted with a shameful Disease for not receiving the Mysteries of *Bacchus* with a proper Reverence, and consulting the Oracle what they were to do, in order to have it remov'd, were directed to make Figures of the Part affected, and present them to the God, which gave them this Counsel: And accordingly the *Philistines*, hoping shortly to be deliver'd from the *Emerods* and *Mice*, wherewith they were sorely infested, took the same Method to get quit of them. Nor is the Practice ceas'd among the *Indians* (as *Tavernier* relates in his Travels, Page 92.) when any Pilgrim goes to a Pagod for the Cure of any Disease, for him to bring the Figure of the Member afflicted, either in Gold, Silver, or Copper, according to his Quality, and to offer it to the Idol in a most submissive Manner. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

* It was no bad Policy in the *Philistines* to take milch Kine, that had never been yok'd before, to draw the Cart, in order to know, whether there was the Hand of God in what had befallen them. As these Creatures were unacquainted with the Yoke, it would be a Wonder if they should go jointly together, and not thwart, or draw counter to each other; it would be a Wonder if their natural Affection would not incline them to return to their Calves, which were left behind; and it would be still a greater Wonder, if, when there were so many different Ways to take, they should go directly forward to *Judea*, without any Manner of Deviation. It was therefore a Matter of no small Sagacity, for them to make this Experiment: To say nothing, that it was a receiv'd Opinion among the *Heathens*, that, in the Motions of an Heifer, or Cow that was never yok'd, there was something *ominous*, and declarative of the Divine Will.

Boa tibi, Phœbus ait, folio occurret in Arvis,
Nullum passu jugum, curvique immunis Aratri;
Huc Duce carpe vias.

OVID, Metam. lib. iii.

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2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.

until they came to the Field of one *Joshua*, and there stood still by a great Stone. *Bethshemeth* was one of the Cities belonging to the *Levites*, and therefore, when Word was brought them of the Arrival of the Ark, they went and took it down, and the Coffer with it; and, cleaving the Wood of the Cart for a Fire, sacrific'd the two Kine for a *Burnt-Offering* to the Lord. But, whether out of Joy or Curiosity, so it was, that some of the *Bethshemites* adventuring to look into the Ark (which was expressly against the divine Command) were immediately slain to the Number of *seventy*, which so terrify'd the rest, that they sent to the People of *Kirjath-jearim*, acquainting them that the *Philistines* had brought back the Ark, and desiring them to come and fetch it, which accordingly they did, and plac'd it in the House of one *Abinadab*, (whose Son was

consecrated to keep it) and there it continu'd for the Space of twenty Years.

From 1 Sam. i. to the End.

UPON the Death of *Eli*, *Samuel* succeeded to the Government; and having called the People together, very probably upon the Occasion of removing the Ark from *Bethshemeth* to *Kirjath-jearim*, * he exhorted them very earnestly to renounce their *idolatrous* Practices, and to devote themselves entirely to the Worship of God, and then they need not doubt but that he would deliver them from all their Enemies. This the People promis'd him faithfully to do; so that *Samuel* dismiss'd them for the present, but order'd them to meet him again, within a certain Time, at † *Mizpeh*.

Samuel's Government, and his Sons Male-Administration.

HERE they held a solemn Fast and Humiliation to the Lord. They wept, and pray'd, confess'd their Sins, offer'd Sacrifices, and ‡ made Libations; and
Samuel

* The Speech, which, according to *Josephus*, *Samuel* makes to the People, upon this Occasion, is to this Effect: — “Ye Men of *Israel*, since ye find by Experience, that the Malice of your Enemies is implacable, and that your earnest Supplications to God for Relief are graciously receiv'd; you should do well to consider, that your Wishing for the Freedom you want will never do the Business, without exerting your Power to the uttermost, upon the proper Means of procuring it: For to do otherwise, is but praying one Way and acting another. Wherefore, in the first Place, be careful not to bring Scandal upon your Profession by ill Manners, but turn yourselves to the Love and Practice of Justice, without Partiality, or Corruption. Purge your Minds of all gross Affections. Turn to God, call upon him, adore him, and honour him in your Lives and Conversations, as well as with your Lips. Do good Things, and Good will come on it, *i. e.* Liberty and Victory; for these are Blessings not to be obtain'd by Force of Men, Strength of Body, or Bands of Soldiers, but God, who is Truth itself, has promis'd them, as the Rewards of Probity and Righteousness, and you may depend upon it, he will never disappoint you.” *Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. c. 2.*

† The *Mizpeh* here mention'd (as appears from the Circumstances of the Story) must be different from that which is remark'd in the History of *Jephthah*. There is indeed another *Mizpeh* mention'd among the Cities of *Judah* (*Josh. xv. 38.*) and a third, among those of *Benjamin* (*Josh. xviii. 26.*) Some are of Opinion, that these two Cities are one and the same, and are only suppos'd to be two, because they lie in the Confines of each Tribe; but, if they are not the same, it seems most probable, that the *Mizpeh* in the Tribe of *Benjamin*, was the City, which is here spoken of. And we may observe farther, that, as *Mizpeh* is said to be situated not far from *Eben-ezer*, and probably on the East, or North Side; so *Shen* (if it be the Name of a Place, and not rather of some sharp Rock thereabouts) was situated not far from it, on the opposite, *i. e.* on the West, or South-west Side, to which *Bethshemeth* must needs be contiguous. *Well's Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. III. c. 1.*

‡ The Words in our Translation run thus: — “And they gathered to *Mizpeh*, and drew Water, and poured it out before the Lord, 1 Sam. vii. 6; But what we are to understand by this Water, the Conjectures of Commentators have been very various. Some take these Words in a metaphorical Sense, to denote those Tears of Contrition, which were drawn, as it were, from the Bottom of their Hearts, and fell from their Eyes before the Lord. Others think, that with this Water they wash'd their Bodies, (as they are suppos'd to have done upon another Occasion, *Exod. xix. 10.*) to signify the Purification of their Souls from the Pollution of Sin. Others, that they made use of it to cleanse the Ground where *Samuel* was to erect an Altar, that it might not stand upon an impure Place. Some suppose that it was employ'd as an Emblem of Humiliation, of Prayer, of Expiation, of Execration, and I know not what besides. But the most probable Opinion is, that this Water was, upon this Occasion, poured out, by Way of Libation, before God: And, for the Support of this, it is commonly alledg'd, that Libations of this Kind were very customary in antient Times; that *Theophrastus*, as he is cited by *Porphyry*, (*de Abst. lib. ii.*) tells us, that the earliest Libations were of Water, though afterwards Honey and Wine came into Request; that *Virgil* (*Aeneid iv.*) mentions the Practice of sprinkling the Water of the Lake *Avernus*; and that *Homer* (*Odys. 12.*) remarks, that, for Want of Wine, the Companions of *Ulysses* pour'd out Water in a Sacrifice, which they offer'd to the Gods. 'Tis certain, that *David* pour'd out unto the Lord the Water, which the three gallant Men in his Army brought him from the Well of *Bethlehem*,

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1116, &c.

Samuel took this Opportunity to administer Justice among them. The *Philistines* hearing of this their Assembly, took the Alarm, and, coming upon them unawares, put them into no small Consternation. Upon *Samuel's* Sacrifice and Intercession however, God declar'd himself manifestly in Favour of the *Israelites*: For, as soon as the Fight began, there was heard * such a dreadful Peal of Thunder, as struck Terror and Amazement into the Enemy, so that they betook themselves instantly to Flight, and were pursu'd by the *Israelites* as far as *Bethcar*. The Truth is, this was so signal a Victory, that, for a long Time the *Philistines* durst not appear upon the Frontiers of *Israel*, but were forc'd to restore the Cities, which they had taken from them; so that *Samuel* had good Reason to set up a Monument (which he did between *Mizpeh* and *Shen*, calling it *Eben-ezer*. i. e. the Stone of Help) in Memory of so great a Deliverance.

AFTER this Action, the most Part of *Samuel's* Government was employ'd in a peaceable Administration of Justice. For which Purpose he took a Circuit every Year round a great Tract of the Country: But, as he grew in Years, he appointed

his two Sons, *Joel* and *Abiah* to the Execution of that Office, who, degenerating * from their Father's Example, became such mercenary and corrupt Judges, that the Elders of *Israel* came in a Body to *Samuel*, complain'd of the Grievances they lay under, by Reason of his Infirmary, and his Sons Male-Administration, and thereupon demanded to have the Form of their Government chang'd, and a King instituted among them, as there was in other Nations.

THIS Demand was far from being agreeable to *Samuel*; however he consulted God upon it, who gave him Answer, that he should comply with the People in what they desir'd, notwithstanding the Affront did terminate not so much upon *Samuel*, as himself: But, before they proceeded to the Choice of a King, he order'd him to acquaint them with what his Prerogatives were, and what Rights they might expect that he would demand from them; and withal, to inform them, † that Slavery to them and their Children, Subjection to the meanest Offices, Loss of Liberty, heavy Taxes, constant War, and many other Inconveniencies, would be the Consequence of a kingly Power. But † all

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hem, at the Hazard of their Lives, 2 Sam. xxiii. 16. and therefore, though the Law does not enjoin any such Liberations of Water; yet, since there is no positive Prohibition of them; why may we not suppose, that, upon this extraordinary Occasion, something singular and extraordinary might have been done? *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

* *Josephus* gives us this Account of the whole Transaction: — “ In some Places God shook the Foundations of the Earth under the Feet of the *Philistines*, so that they could not stand without staggering: In others, it open'd, and swallow'd them up alive, before they knew where they were; while the Claps of Thunder, and Flashes of Fire were so violent, that their very Eyes and Limbs were scorch'd to such a Degree, that they could neither see their Way before them, nor handle their Arms.” *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vi. c. 2.

* It may possibly be made a Question, why God did not punish *Samuel*, as he did *Eli*, for the Wickedness of his Sons? But to this it may be answer'd, That *Samuel's* Sons were not so bad as those of *Eli*; since taking Bribes privately was not like openly profaning the *Tabernacle*, and making the Worship of God contemptible. And, besides this, it is possible, that *Samuel* might be ignorant of the Corruption of his Sons; since he liv'd at *Ramah*, and they at *Beer-sheba*. *Patrick's* Commentary.

† The Rules of Conduct, which God prescribes to the Person, that should at any Time be constituted King over *Israel*, are of a quite different Sort to those Practices. He shall not multiply Horses to himself, neither shall he multiply Wives to himself; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself Silver or Gold. He shall write him a Copy of the Law in a Book, and he shall read therein all the Days of his Life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, and to keep all the Words of this Law, and these Statutes, to do them, that his Heart be not lifted up above his Brethren, and that he turn not aside from the Commandments, to the Right Hand, or to the Left, Deut. xvii. 16, &c. So that *Samuel* does not, in the Words before us, define what are the just Rights of Kings, but describes only such Practices, as the Kings of the East, who were despotick Princes, and look'd upon their Subjects as so many Slaves, were generally accustom'd to: And the Prophet had some Reason to draw a King in those black Colours, because the *Israelites* desir'd such a one as their Neighbours had, who were all under the absolute Dominion of their Princes. *Le Clerc's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

† It is generally suppos'd, that what made the *Israelites* so urgent at this Time for a King, was a present Streight, they thought themselves in, for Want of an able Leader: For *Nababsh*, the King of the *Amorites* coming up to *Jabesh-Gilead*

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all these Remonstrances avail'd nothing: The People persist in their Desire of a King, and God tells *Samuel*, that he will not fail to give them one.

Saul is appointed King over Israel.

THE Appearance of Providence in the Election of their King was indeed very remarkable. *Saul*, the Son of *Kish*, of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, was a very tall, handsome Youth; and it so happening at this Time, that some of his Father's Asses being gone astray, he, and a Servant along with him, were sent to look for them. They wander'd about a great Way without gaining any Intelligence, till coming to *Ramah*, the Place of *Samuel's* Residence, at his Servant's Instigation, he went to advise with him concerning the Asses. God had appriz'd *Samuel* with the Coming of the Person that Day, who was to be appointed King; and therefore *Samuel*,

when he saw him, shew'd him all the Respect, that was due to his future Character. He took him with him † to the *High-Place*, where he was going to sacrifice; he invited him to feast with him upon the Sacrifices, that were to be offer'd; and had invited thirty Guests more to bear him Company. He seated him in the highest Place, and distinguish'd him likewise by ordering the choicest Dishes to be serv'd up to him. That Evening he had a long Conference with him in private, and the next Morning, as he was waiting on him out of Town, he order'd † the Servant to be sent before, that he might acquaint him with God's Purpose of exalting him to the *regal* Dignity; and, having † anointed him to be King of *Israel*, he foretold him several † Events, which should befall him, in his Return home,

From 1 Sam. i. to the End.

Gilead, and encamping before it, had put the Inhabitants into such a Fright, that, without more to do, they offer'd to surrender upon Terms, telling him, that *they would become Subjects to him, if he would make a League with them*, 1 Sam. xi. 1. But the haughty *Amorite*, in Contempt of *Israel*, let them know, that, if he made a League with them, the Condition thereof should be, *that they should come out to him, and let him thrust out all their right Eyes, and lay it for a Reproach upon all Israel*. The Elders of *Jabesh*, in this sad Circumstance, demanded seven Days Respite, that they might send Messengers into all the Coasts of *Israel*, and if in that Time no Succours arriv'd, they would submit. This, it is thought, was the Reason for their pressing so hard upon *Samuel* at this Time for a King; whereas their Duty was, to have enquir'd of the Lord (as they had done at other Times) who it was, that he would be pleas'd to constitute the *General* in this Exigence, to lead out their Forces against their Enemies. *Howell's History*, in the Notes.

† In several Places of Scripture, the *Canaanites* are said to have had their *High-Places*, whereon they worshipp'd their *Idols*, but this is the first Instance of any belonging to the People of God; and 'tis the Opinion of some learned Men, that this Appointment of a *private* or *inferior* Place of Worship (even while the Ark and Tabernacle were in Being) by so great an Authority, as that of *Samuel*, gave Rise to the Institution of *Synagogues*, and *Proseuchas* in so many Places of the Kingdom afterwards. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† This was with Design to let *Saul* understand, that what he was going to do was by the Divine Order and Appointment; and that, when it should come to the casting of Lots, (as it did afterwards, 1 Sam. x. 20.) he might perceive, that he was chosen King by Chance of a Lot. There might be likewise this further Reason for *Samuel's* bidding *Saul* to send away his Servant, *viz.* lest the People, suspecting *Samuel* to do this by his own Will, more than by God's Appointment, might be inclinable to mutiny. Since this royal Unction then was only design'd for *Saul's* private Satisfaction, it was necessary not to have it publish'd, before the People had proceeded to a publick Election of their King. *Howell's History*, in the Notes.

† We read of no express Command for the anointing of Kings, and yet it is plain, from the Parable of *Jotham*, Judg. ix. 8. that this was a Custom two hundred Years before this Time. Why Oil, rather than any other Liquid, was the Symbol of conveying a regal Authority, we are no where inform'd. 'Tis true, that God directed *Moses* to consecrate *Aaron* to the High-Priest's Office, by anointing his Head with Oil, *Exod.* xxix. 7. But the anointing of Kings, we may presume, was of a *prior* Date. *Unction* indeed, in the Days of *Jacob*, was the common Method of setting apart from common Use even Things inanimate, *Gen.* xxviii. 18. and therefore it may well be suppos'd, that Persons of such Designation, as Kings were, were all along admitted by the same Ceremony, which might be of Divine Appointment, perhaps at the first Institution of Government, in the *Antediluvian* World, and thence handed down, by a long Tradition, to future Generations. This Rite of Unction, in short, was so much the Divine Care, that we find God giving *Moses* a Prescription how to make the consecrating Oil, *Exod.* xxx. 23. But tho' *Solomon* was anointed with Oil taken from the *Tabernacle*, yet since *Samuel* was no Priest, and could not therefore have Access to the *Tabernacle*, which at this Time was at some Distance from him, it is more reasonable to think (tho' some *Jewish* Doctors will have it otherwise) that what he made use of, upon this Occasion, was no more than common Oil. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The Events, which *Samuel* told *Saul* he should meet with in his Return home, were these:—That, near *Rachel's* Tomb, he should meet two Men, who should inform him, that his Father's Asses were found again; that, departing

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home, in Token of the Truth of his Designation to that Office.

Thus *Saul* was appointed King, but then it was only between *Samuel* and himself. To make his Choice and Inauguration therefore more publick, *Samuel* called an Assembly of the People together at *Mizpeh*, to which Place the Ark of the Lord was brought, that they might with more Solemnity proceed to the Election of a King. The Method of their electing was this: — First, the Lot was cast for every Tribe separately, to know out of which the King was to be chosen, and the Lot fell upon that of *Benjamin*: Next, it was cast for all the Families of this Tribe, and fell upon that of *Mitri*: And lastly, it was cast for all the Persons of this Family, and fell upon *Saul*, the Son of *Kish*, who, when he came into the Assembly, (for he chose to be absent at

the Time of the Election) and had been recommended by *Samuel* in a short Speech upon that Occasion, appear'd so portly, and with so much Majesty, that he gain'd the Affections and good Wishes of all, except some few disorderly Persons, who disapprov'd of the Choice, and (in pure Contempt) refus'd to † make him the usual Presents; which *Saul* could not but perceive, tho', in Point of Prudence, he thought proper, at that Time, † to overlook it.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

SAUL had not been many Days upon the Throne, before there happen'd a fit Occasion for him to exert himself. *Nabash*, King of the *Ammonites*, laid Siege to † *Jabesh-Gilead* on the other Side of *Jordan*, and had so closely begirt it, that the People offer'd to capitulate; but on no better Conditions would he permit them, than that each Man should have † his Right Eye

And conquers
the cruel King
of the Ammo-
nites.

departing thence, he would meet three Men going to *Bethel*, one of them carrying three Kids, another three Cakes of Bread, and the third a Bottle of Wine, and that they should give him two Parts thereof; and that, when he came to *Geba*, (which was commonly called *the Hill of God*) where there was a Garrison of the *Philistines*, he should meet a Company of Prophets going into the City, where the Spirit of God should fall upon him, and he (to the Wonder of all, that should hear him) should begin to prophesy among them: All which Signs happen'd exactly as *Samuel* had foretold them, 1 Sam. x. 2, &c.

† It was a constant Custom among the eastern Nations, and is even to this Day, whenever they approach'd the Prince, to present him with something: But here, in the Case of *Saul*, at his first Accession to the Throne, it was the proper Method of recognizing him. The *Chaldee* Paraphrase says, that *they did not come to salute him, or wish him an happy Reign*: But this is the same Thing, because the first Salutation offer'd to a King, was always attended with Presents, which carry'd with them a Sign of Peace and Friendship, of Congratulation and Joy, and of Subjection and Obedience. *Calmet's* Commentary.

† In this *Saul* acted a very wise and politic Part, as being unwilling to begin his Reign with any Disorder or Tumult, which his just Resentment of such an Affront might perhaps have occasion'd. These *Sons of Belial* (as they are term'd) were, very likely, Persons of some Rank and Quality, and therefore they despis'd *Saul*, for his having been related to a small Tribe, and sprung from an obscure Family. If then he had taken Notice of this Affront, and not reveng'd it, he had shewn himself mean-spirited; and if he had resented it as it deserv'd, he might both have provok'd a Party against him, and, at his first setting out, incurr'd the Censure of Rashness and Cruelty: A Prejudice, which, in the future Course of his Reign, would have been far from doing him any good. *Howell's* History, in the Notes.

† This Town lay on the East-Side of *Jordan*, and not far distant from the *Ammonites*, who besieg'd it. It was in Being in the Times of *Eusebius* and *St Jerom*, and was situate upon a Hill about six Miles distant from *Pella*, as one goes to *Gerasa*. It is sometimes in Scripture simply called *Jabesh*, and what the Inhabitants thereof are farther remarkable for, is — their grateful Remembrance of the Benefits, they had receiv'd from *Saul*, when, after his Death, having heard, that the *Philistines* had fastened his Body to the Wall of *Bethshan*, they went all Night, and took the Body of *Saul*, and the Bodies of his Sons from the Wall, and came to *Jabesh*, and burnt them there, and took their Bones, and buried them under a Tree at *Jabesh*, and fasted seven Days; for which they were highly commended by *David*, 2 Sam. ii. 5. *Wells's* Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. III.

† The Reason why *Nabash* was for having their right Eyes put out, was not only to bring a Reproach upon *Israel*, as himself declares, but to disable them likewise from serving in War; for, as the Manner of fighting in those Days was chiefly with Bow and Arrow, Sword and Shield, the Loss of the Right-Eye made them incapable of either; because, in Combat, the left Eye is cover'd with the Shield, and in shooting with the Bow, 'tis usual to wink with it, so that depriving them of their Right-Eye made them useless in War: And yet this barbarous King thought it not proper to put out both their Eyes; for then he would have made them utterly incapable of doing him the Service, or acquiring the Tribute for him, which he expected from them. *Calmet's* Commentary.

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Eye put out. Hereupon they sent to *Gibeab* to demand Aid of King *Saul* † in the Space of seven Days, (for that was all the Time allow'd them) and he, having summon'd all *Israel* to come to their Assistance upon Pain of Death, in a very short Time had an Army of three hundred Thousand *Israelites*, besides thirty Thousand of the Tribe of *Judah*, and with these he promis'd to relieve the *Besieg'd* the very next Day. Nor was he worse than his Word: For, dividing his Army into three Parts, and falling upon the *Besiegers* about Break of Day, he so totally routed and dispers'd them, that scarce two of them were left together.

THIS Victory, † and the Deliverance which it procur'd from a barbarous and insulting Enemy, rais'd their new King's Fame to such a Degree, that some, remembering the Indignities that were put upon him at his *Coronation*, were (in the Height of their Zeal) for having them now punish'd with Death; but *Saul* very prudently oppos'd the Motion, and express'd his Aversion to have the Glories of that Day sully'd with the Blood of any of his Subjects.

FROM this Victory however *Samuel*

took Occasion to give those, who had hitherto refus'd their Allegiance, an Opportunity of coming in, and recognizing the King; and for that Purpose order'd a general Meeting at *Gilgal* to confirm *Saul's* Election; which accordingly was celebrated with Mirth and Joy between both King and People, as well as with Sacrifices and Thanksgivings to God, as the Author of all their Successes.

SAMUEL was, at this Time, to resign the Government entirely into the Hands of *Saul*; and therefore in the Speech, which he made upon this Occasion, he insist'd not a little upon the Vindication of his own Administration. He reminded them of the great Transgressions, which they and their Forefathers had committed; he set before them the Blessings consequent upon their Obedience, and the Judgments, which would certainly attend their Disobedience to the Laws of God; he gave them to understand, that they had been * far from doing an acceptable Thing to God, in rejecting his Government, and desiring a King; and (that they might not think, that he mention'd this out of any Prejudice, or indeed without a divine Direction) he gave them this Sign: —

That

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

*Samuel's
Speech upon the
Resignation of
the Govern-
ment.*

† It may seem a little strange, that this barbarous Prince should be willing to allow the *Jabeshites* the Respite of seven Days, but *Josephus* assigns this Reason for it, viz. that he had so mean an Opinion of the People, that he made no Difficulty to comply with their Request. *Saul* indeed had been appointed King, but having not as yet taken upon him the Government, he liv'd, just as he did before, in a private Condition, 1 Sam. xi. 5. So that had he, upon this Notice, endeavour'd to levy an Army, he could scarce think it possible to be done, in so short a Space as seven Days; and therefore he thought he might grant them these Conditions without any Danger, and without driving them to Desperation, as he might have done, had he denied them their Request. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† *Josephus* acquaints us, that *Saul* did not content himself with barely relieving *Jabesh*, but carry'd on a War against the *Ammonites*, slew their King, laid waste their Country, enrich'd his Army with Spoils, and brought the People safe and victorious to their Homes again. *Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. c. 6.*

* That Part of the Speech, which *Josephus* introduces *Samuel*, as making to the People, and complaining of their Importunity for a Change of Government, is conceiv'd in these Terms: — “ What should you chuse another King for, after the Experience of so many signal Mercies, and miraculous Deliverances, while you were under God's Protection, and own'd him for your Governor? You have forgotten the Story of your Forefather *Jacob's* coming into *Egypt* with only seventy Men in his Train, and purely for Want of Bread; how God provided for them, and, by his Blessing, how they increas'd and multiply'd. You have forgotten the Slavery and Oppression, they groan'd under, till, upon their Cries and Supplications for Relief, God rescu'd them himself, without the Help of Kings, by the Hands of *Moses* and *Aaron*, who brought them out of *Egypt* into the Land you are now possess'd of. How can you then be so ungrateful now, after so many Blessings and Benefits receiv'd, as to depart from the Reverence and Allegiance, you owe to so powerful and so merciful a Protector? How often have you been deliver'd up into the Hands of your Enemies for your Apostacy and Disobedience, and as often afterward restor'd to God's Favour, and your Liberty, upon your Humiliation and Repentance? Who was it but God, that gave you Victory first over the *Affyrians*, then over the *Ammonites*, and then over the *Moabites*, and last of all over the *Philistines*, not by the Influence and Direction of Kings, but under the Conduct of *Jephthah* and *Gideon*? What Madnefs has possess'd you then, to abandon an heavenly Governor for an earthly, &c.” *Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. c. 6.*

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That God would immediately send a Storm of Thunder and Rain, which, in the † Time of *Wheat Harvest* (as it was then) was a Thing very unusual; and this coming to pass according to his Prediction, so terrify'd the People, that they acknowledg'd their Offence, and intreated *Samuel* to intercede for them; which he not only promis'd them to do, but to assist them likewise with his best Instructions, so long as they adher'd to the Observation of God's Laws; but if they despis'd them, they were to expect to be destroy'd, *both they and their King*.

Saul's Victory
over the Philistines.

AFTER this Victory over the *Ammonites*, *Saul*, in the second Year of his Reign, disbanded all his Army, except three Thousand Men, two of which he kept for his Body-Guard, and the other Thousand were to attend his Son *Jonathan*; who, being a Prince of great Bravery, had taken an Opportunity, and cut off a Garri-

son of the *Philistines* in † *Geba*, which in Effect was a Declaration of War.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

THE *Philistines*, upon this Occasion, rais'd a very powerful Army, which consisted of ‡ three Thousand Chariots, six Thousand Horse, and a Multitude of Foot almost innumerable, and came and encamp'd at † *Michmasb*. The *Israelitish* Army, which was to *rendevouz* at *Gilgal*, came in but very slowly, and of those that did, several were so faint-hearted, as to hide themselves in the Rocks and Caves; and others, thinking themselves never safe enough, retir'd even beyond the *Jordan*. The Truth is, that both Prince and People were sadly intimidated, because *Samuel*, whose Company at this Juncture was impatiently expected, was not yet come; so that the King, fearing that the Enemy would fall upon him before he had made his Addresses to God for Success, order'd Sacrifices to be made; and the Burnt-Of-

fering

† It is an Observation of *St Jerom*, that this Harvest in *Judea* began about the End of *June*, or the Beginning of *July*, in which Season Thunder and Rain was never known, but only in the Spring and Autumn, the one called *the former*, and the other *the latter Rain*; and therefore *Samuel* by this Preamble, *Is it not Wheat Harvest to Day?* Chap. xii. 17. meant to signify the Greatness of the Miracle, God was going to work; that he could in an Instant, and in a Time, when they least of all expected it, deprive them of all the Comforts of Life, as they justly deserv'd, for their rejecting him, and his Prophet, who was so powerful with him, as, by his Prayers to produce such Wonders. *Patrick's*, *Calmet's*, and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

† Among the Cities of *Benjamin*, mention'd in *Joshua* xviii. 24, &c. we read of *Gaba*, *Gibeab*, and *Gibeon*; and in *Joshua* xxi. 17. we read, that the two Cities, given to the Children of *Aaron*, out of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, were *Gibeon* and *Geba*; whence it is not to be doubted, but that *Gaba*, mention'd in the xviiiith Chapter, was the same with *Geba*, that we read of in Chap. xxi. But then it will no ways follow, that this *Geba*, or *Gaba*, is the same with *Gibeab*, because this *Gibeab* was the royal City, where *Saul* dwelt, and is therefore expressly called *Gibeab of Saul*; and for that Reason it cannot be suppos'd, that the *Philistines*, at this Time, had a Garrison there. *Wells's* Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. III.

‡ The Words in the Original, and in our Translation, are *thirty Thousand*; but the *Syriack* and *Arabick* Versions (which we have thought proper to follow) make them no more than *three Thousand*: And indeed whoever considers, that *Pharaoh*, King of *Egypt*, when he had muster'd all his Forces together, could bring no more than six hundred of these Chariots into the Field, and all the other Princes, whose Equipages are related in Scripture, much fewer, must needs think it a Thing incredible, that the *Philistines*, out of their small Territories, which extended no farther, than the two Tribes of *Simeon* and *Dan*, along the Coasts of the *Mediterranean-Sea*, could ever be able to raise so vast an Armament; no, nor all the Nations, that they could possibly call in to their Assistance. For besides that, in the Account of all Armies, the *Cavalry* is always more numerous than the Chariots of War, (which is different here) the largest Armies, that we ever read of, were able to compass a very few of these Chariots, in Comparison of the Number here specify'd. *Mithridates*, in his vast Army, had but a *hundred*; *Darius* but *two*; and *Antiochus Epiphanes* (2 Mac. xiii. 2.) but *three*. So that we must either say, that the Transcribers made a Mistake in the *Hebrew* Copy, or (with some other Commentators) suppose, that this *thirty Thousand Chariots*, were not Chariots of War, but most of them Carriages only, for the Conveyance of the Baggage belonging to such a vast Multitude of Men, or for the Deportation of the Plunder, they hop'd to be Masters of by having conquer'd the Country. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and Universal History.

‡ *Eusebius* and *St Jerom* inform us, that in their Time, there was a large Town of this Name, lying about nine Miles from *Jerusalem*, near *Ramah*; and the Text tells us, that it was *eastward from Beth-aven*. Now *Beth-aven*, which signifies *the House of Iniquity*, is suppos'd to be the same with *Bethel*, and was so called, after that *Jeroboam*, the Son of *Nebat*, had set up his golden Calves to be worshipp'd here: But, as *Bethel* lay to the East of *Michmasb*, and not *Michmasb* to the East of *Bethel*, as the Text seems to say, the Translation should be, that they encamp'd at *Michmasb*, having *Beth-aven on the East*, i. e. they seiz'd on that Post, which *Saul* had before in *Michmasb*, on Mount *Bethel*, Ver. 2. *Calmet's* Commentary.

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fering was just finish'd, when News was brought him, that *Samuel* was arriv'd,

SAMUEL had told him beforehand, that, by the Expiration of seven Days, he would not fail to meet him at *Gilgal*; and therefore, being offended at his Diffidence and Impatience, he not only sharply rebuk'd him, but declar'd likewise that God, by this Way of Proceeding, would in Time be provok'd to remove the Kingdom from him and his Posterity, and give it to another, that better deserv'd it; and so, having left *Gilgal*, he went to *Gibeah*, whither *Saul* and his Son *Jonathan* follow'd him, with a small Army of about six Thousand, and these so badly provided for Action, that they had no Manner of Weapons, but what they could

make out of their *working Tools*, because the *Philistines* would not, at that Time, * permit so much as a Smith to live among them.

WHILE the *Philistine* Army lay at *Michmash*, they sent out Parties several Ways to ravage the Country, and met with no Manner of Opposition; till *Jonathan*, accompany'd with † his Armour-Bearer only, found Means to ascend a steep Rock, where the Enemy least of all expected an Invasion; and so falling upon them unawares, in a short Time, killed about twenty of them; which put the rest † into such a Consternation, that; mistrusting Friends for Foes, they began to slaughter and destroy one another. *Saul* had soon Intelligence of this Disorder in the Enemy's Camp;

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

* The Precaution which the *Philistines* took to hinder the *Israelites* from providing themselves with Weapons, is no more than what other Conquerors have done to the Nations they have vanquish'd. *Porfenna*, when he made Peace with the *Romans*, restrain'd them from the Use of all Iron, but what was necessary in the Tillage of their Ground. *Cyrus*, when he subdu'd the *Lydians*, for Fear of a Revolt, took from them the Use of Arms, and, instead of a laborious Life spent in War, suffer'd them to sink into Softness and Luxury, so that they soon lost their antient Valour: And (to instance in one Prince more) *Nebuchadnezzar*, when he had made himself Master of *Judea*, took along with him into *Babylon*, all the Craftsmen and Smiths, that the poorest of the People, which he left behind, might be in no Condition to rebel, 2 Kings xxiv. 14. The only Wonder is, why the *Israelites*, after they had regain'd their Liberty, under the Government of *Samuel*, and given the *Philistines* so total an Overthrow at *Eben-ezer*, did not restore these Artificers, and so provide themselves with proper Arms against the next Occasion? But, besides the extream Sloth and Negligence, which appears in the *Israelites* whole Conduct during this Period, it was not so easy a Matter, in so short a Time, to recover a Trade that was lost; especially among a People, that had no Iron Mines, and were so wholly addicted to the Feeding of Cattle, that they made no Account of any mechanical Arts. In the famous Victory, which they gain'd over *Sisera*, we are told, that *there was not a Shield or Spear seen among fifty Thousand Men of Israel*, *Judg.* v. 8. but, notwithstanding this, they had Bows, and Arrows, and Slings, which the Men of *Gibeah* could manage to a wonderful Advantage, *Judg.* xx. 16. And besides these, the *Israelites*, upon this Occasion, might convert their Instruments of Husbandry, their Hatchets, their Spades, their Forks, their Mattocks, &c. into Instruments of War; a much better Shift than what we read of some, who, in antient Times, had no other Arms than Clubs, and sharpen'd Stakes, harden'd in the Fire.

Non jam certamine agresti

Stipitibus duris agitur, Sudibusque præcussis.

VIRGIL, *Æneid* 7.

† This Action of *Jonathan's*, consider'd in itself, was doubtless a very rash Attempt, and contrary to the Laws of War, which prohibit all under Command (as he was) from engaging the Enemy, or entering upon any Enterprize without the General's Order; but what may very justly be said in Excuse of it is,——That he had a Divine Incitation to it, which he might probably feel, upon the Sight of the *Philistines* appearing as if they intended to assault *Gibeah*, and upon the Information, which he might receive, of the great Spoil which the three Parties made of the poor People in the Country. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† How two Men could put the whole Army into such a Consternation, may seem somewhat extraordinary; but it should be consider'd, that *Jonathan* and his Armour-bearer, climbing up a Way, that was never attempted before, might come upon them unawares, and surprize them; that this Action might happen (as *Jesephus* thinks) early in the Morning, when a great Part of the *Philistines* Army was asleep; that even, had they been all awake, *Jonathan* might have so posted himself, (as *Horatius Coclès* did on a Bridge) as to be able to maintain his Pass against all the Force of the Enemy; that those, who made at him, (as only one perhaps could come at a Time) he with one Stroke might lay flat on the Ground, and his Armour-bearer immediately dispatch them; that the rest, seeing them act thus intrepidly, might take them for two Scouts, or *Vanguarders* only of a great Army, that was coming up, and ready to fall upon them; that the Army of the *Philistines*, being made up of different Nations, might be in the greater Confusion, as either not understanding, or else suspecting one another; and (what might compleat their Consternation) that God, at this Time, might send a panick Fear upon them, which, whenever he does it, (even in the Opinion of Heathen themselves) is enough to make the stoutest tremble, and the most heroick Spirits betake themselves to Flight.

Ἐν γὰρ Σαμωὺν καὶ τὸν ἀσπίδα
ἀνδρῶν τῶν ἐν τῇ μάχῃ ἐκείνῃ.

PIND. *Nemæa* 9.

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Camp, and therefore, willing to make the most of such an Opportunity, he got together what Forces he could, and fell upon the *Philistines* with such Fury, that he totally routed and defeated them.

IN the Heat of the Chase, he caus'd Proclamation to be made, that (upon Pain of Death) none should dare to eat any Thing until it was Night, that the Slaughter of the Enemy might not be retarded. But herein he defeated his own Purpose; for the People, for Want of Refreshment, grew faint in the Pursuit, so that the Enemy escap'd into their own Country: And (what was another grievous Consequence of this *Interdict*) his Son *Jonathan*, who had been absent, when the Proclamation was made, had like to have fallen a Sacrifice to his Father's *rash Vow*, * merely for eating a little Honey, when he was ready to die with Hunger, had not the People interpos'd, and pleaded the Merit of that young Prince to whom the Honour of the Day was chiefly owing.

AFTER this Victory, *Saul* rul'd the Kingdom with an higher Hand, and repuls'd his Enemies wherever they assail'd him. He had indeed a very large and flourishing Family. *Abinoam*, the Daughter of *Abimaaz*, was his Wife; *Jonathan*, *Ishui*, and *Melchishua* were his Sons; *Michal* and *Merab* his Daughters; *Abner*, his Cousin-german, was *General* of his Forces; and, as himself was a warlike Prince, God made choice of him to put in Execution a Sentence, (b) which, many

Years before, he had decreed against the *Amalekites*, for their opposing the *Israelites* in their Passage out of the Land of *Egypt*. From 1 Sam. i. to the End.

HIS Commission was utterly to destroy the *Amalekites*, Men, Women, and Children, and to leave not so much as one Creature of any Kind alive: But, instead of executing this according to the *Letter* of the Precept, * he sav'd *Agag* their King, and the best of the Cattle alive; and when *Samuel* came to expostulate the Matter with him, his Pretence was, that what he had spar'd was in pure Respect to God, in order to have them offer'd to him in Sacrifice. But *Samuel*, who knew very well, that this *Reserve* was made out of a Principle of *Avarice*, more than *Devotion*, first laid before him the Iniquity of his Conduct, and then declar'd to him God's immovable Purpose of alienating the Kingdom from his Family; which made so deep an Impression upon him, that he acknowledg'd his Fault, intreated the Prophet (who was going abruptly to leave him) to stay, and make Intercession for him, and so far to honour him *before the People*, (from whom he apprehended a *Revolt*) as to join with him in Worship to God, which *Samuel* consented to do: But, before he departed, he order'd *Agag* (who by this Time began to hope for Mercy) to be brought forth to him, and himself, with his own Hands, fell upon him, and slew him. And over the Amalekites; but his Disobedience, in not destroying them all.

THIS was the last Interview, which *Samuel* had with *Saul*; for, after this David is anointed King in his Stead. Action,

* When *Saul* told his Son *Jonathan*, that, for eating this Honey, contrary to his *Interdict*, he should surely die, because the Reverence, which he had for his Vow, was more to him than all the Kindred and Tenderness of Nature, *Josephus* introduces the Son making his Father an Answer, not unlike that which *Jephthah's* Daughter, upon a like Occasion, return'd to him: "That Death, says he, shall be welcome to me, which acquits my Father of the Obligation of a religious Vow, and only befalls me, in Consequence of so glorious a Victory to him, that gave me Being. I have liv'd long enough, since I have liv'd to see the Pride and Insolence of the *Philistines* brought down by the Heroes, which will serve me for a Consolation in all my other Sufferings." And the Historian tells us farther, that the whole Multitude was so charm'd with the Piety and Bravery of the young Man, that, in an Extasy of Tenderness and Compassion, they took him away out of the Hands of his incens'd Father, with an Oath, that they would not suffer an Hair of that Person's Head to be touched, who had been so instrumental in a Victory, that tended to the Preservation of them all. Antiq. lib. vi. c. 7.

(b) Vid. Exod. xvii. 8, &c. and Deut. xxv. 17, &c.

* *Josephus* seems to hint, that *Saul* sav'd this *Amalekite* King alive, because he was taken with the Comeliness and Majesty of his Person; but others rather think, that he intended him to decorate his Triumph. For when it is said of *Saul*, that he came to *Carmel* after this Victory, and set him up a Place, 1 Sam. xv. 12. the Word *Yab*, they say, will signify an Arch, as well as any Thing else; and thence they conclude, that *Saul's* Purpose was to erect a triumphal Arch, in Memory of his Defeat of the *Amalekites*; and that he kept their King alive, to be led captive in that magnificent Procession, wherein he was to make a Display of his Victory. *Cahner's* Commentary.

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Action, he retir'd to his House at *Ramah*, where (tho' he visited *Saul* no more) he ceas'd not to lament the sad Condition, into which he was fallen. It was not long however before God awoke him out of his *pensive* Mood, and sent him to *Beth-lehem*, under Colour of sacrificing there, to anoint *David*, the Son of *Jesse*, King and Successor to *Saul*. *Jesse* had eight Sons, and, when *Samuel* came to his House, seven of them were brought before him. *Eliab*, the eldest, was a goodly Personage, and him the Prophet suppos'd at first Sight to have been the Person, whom God had pitch'd upon to succeed *Saul*; but being instructed otherwise, and, upon Enquiry, finding that *Jesse* had another Son, who, at that Time, was in the Fields keeping the Sheep, he order'd him to be sent for; and, as he was a very fair and beautiful Youth, immediately upon his entering the Room; he perceiv'd, that he was the Person, whom God had made Choice of; and, accordingly, he took an Opportunity, and † singling him out from the rest of his Brethren, pour'd Oil on his Head, and anointed him King. Nor was the Ceremony useleſs; for, from that Time forward, *David* found himself inwardly possess'd with a Spirit of Wisdom, and Prudence, and Courage, and other Qualifications both of Body and Mind, that are requisite in a Prince *.

SAUL, in the mean Time, declin'd more and more in the Favour of God; and as he was naturally of a timorous and suspicious Temper, an unhappy Turn of Mind grew upon him, and settled at last in a confirm'd *Melancholy*, but such an one, as was frequently attended with violent Perturbations, and sometimes with direct Frenzy. In this Condition, some of his Courtiers advis'd him to *Musick*, which would be of some Use to lull his disturb'd Mind to Rest; and accordingly recommended *David*, not only as an excellent Master this Way, but a Man of other rare Qualifications, both *internal* and *external*, enough to engage his Favour.

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Saul grows Melancholy, and sends for David to play to him.

UPON this Recommendation he was sent for to Court, where *Saul* was greatly taken with the Beauty of his Person; but, when he heard him exercise his Skill upon the *Harp*, he was pleas'd above measure, and quite transported from all uneasy and melancholick Thoughts. *Saul*, in short, conceiv'd such a Kindness for *David* for having cur'd him of his Malady, that he made him one of his *Armour-bearers*, tho' *David*, when he found the King better, return'd to his Father's House again.

THE *Philistines* not long before had receiv'd a remarkable Defeat from *Saul*; but, having now recruited their Forces, they came and encamp'd between † *Succoth*

David slays the Champion Goliath.

† Our Translation says, that *Samuel* anointed him in the Midst of his Brethren, and for this it is pretended, that, as this Unction was a solemn Act, and the only Title which *David* had to the Kingdom, it was necessary to have it done in the Presence of some Witnesses, for which Purpose none were more proper, than those of his own Family. But it is plain, from his Brother *Eliab*'s treating him after this, (1 Sam. xvii. 28.) that he was not privy to his being anointed King elect over God's People; and therefore, since the Words will equally bear the Sense of *from the Midst*, as well as *in the Midst* of his Brethren, it is more reasonable to suppose, that, as this was the Ceremony of his Designation to the Kingdom only, few or none (except his Father perhaps) were admitted to it. And there was the less Reason for Witnesses upon this Occasion, because *David* never laid claim to the Crown till after *Saul*'s Decease, and was then, at two several Times, 1st, When he was made King over the Tribe of *Judah*, and 2d, when made King over all the Tribes of *Israel*, anointed publicly. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries, and *Howell's* History, in the Notes.

* They, who credit the Scripture History in this Affair, will easily account for these extraordinary Accomplishments and Improvements; for That assures us, that the Spirit of the Lord came upon *David* from that Day forward, 1 Sam. xvi. 13. and I should be glad to learn from those, who do not credit this Circumstance of the History in the strict Sense of the Text, how otherwise they can account for these extraordinary Effects and Endowments, which immediately ensu'd *David*'s Designation to the Throne; how a Designation to Empire, I say, which, in its ordinary Course, is too apt to corrupt, debase, and overset with Vanity, should raise an obscure Youth, uneducated, and little accounted of even in the Esteem of a Parent's Partiality, in an obscure Age and Country, without the Advantage either of Instruction or Example, into the greatest Musician, the noblest Poet, and the most consummate Hero of all Antiquity. The Life of *David*, by the Author of *Revelation* examined.

† *Succoth* and *Azekah* lay to the South of *Jerusalem*, and the East of *Bethlehem*, about four Leagues from the former, and five from the latter; and the ancient Valley of *Eliab* must consequently lie not far distant from them, though later Travellers place it at no more than a League's Distance from *Jerusalem*. *Calmet's* Commentary.

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cotb and *Azekab*, while *Saul*, with his Army, took Ground upon the Hill, that is above the Valley of *Elah*, which separated the two Camps. While the Armies lay thus facing each other, a Champion nam'd *Goliab*, of a prodigious *gigantick* Stature, * being full ten Feet high, with Arms, and Armour proportionable, came out of the Camp of the *Philistines* for forty Days successively, and challeng'd any one of the *Israelites* to a single Combat. * This *single Combat* was to decide the Fate of the War: But none of the *Israelites* durst adventure upon it, until *David*, who happen'd at this Time to come to the Camp, † with Provisions for his three elder Brethren, that were then in the

Service, seeing this great gigantick Creature thus vaunt himself, and hearing withal what Reward the King had promis'd to the Person, that should kill him, viz. that he † would give him his Daughter in Marriage and ennoble his Family, was mov'd by a divine Impulse to accept of the Challenge, which he some ways discover'd to the Standers-by. His eldest Brother *Eliab*, hearing such Words drop from him, took him, and reprov'd him for his Rashness; but, as his Declaration, by this Time, had reach'd the King's Ears, the King sent for him, and, having survey'd his Youth, told him with Concern, that he fear'd he would never be able to encounter a Man, that was so much older,

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* The Words in the Text are, ———— *Whose Height was six Cubits and a Span*; so that, taking a *Cubit* to be twenty Inches and a half, and a *Span* to be three Inches, and a little more, the whole will amount to about twelve Feet and an half: A Stature above as tall again as usual! The lowest Computation of the *Cubit* however brings it to near *ten Feet*, which is the Standard that we have set it at; though it must not be dissembled, that both the *Septuagint* and *Josephus* have reduc'd it to little more than *eight Feet*, which but badly comports with the Weight and Vastness of his Armour; though it might suit their Design perhaps, in accommodating their Account to the Credibility of their *Heathen* Readers. But be that as it will, several Authors (to shew this vast Size of the Man not to be beyond the Bounds of Probability) have written *ex professo de Gigantibus*; among whom *Harmannus Conringius*, in his Book *de antiquo Statu Holmsladii*, and in another, *de Habitu Corporum Germanorum*, have demonstrated, that the antient *Germani* were of a vast Size, even as *Cæsar*, *de Bello Gall.* testifies of them, by calling them, *immani Corporum Magnitudine Homines*, Men of a huge Greatness of Body. Nay, even *Josephus* himself, who is quoted for denying the Existence of Giants, furnishes us with an Argument in their behalf, when he gives us an Account of some Bones of a prodigious Size, which were found in *Hebron*; as *Acosta*, in his History of the *Indies*, Lib. i. c. 10. makes mention of Bones of an incredible Bigness, and of a Race of Giants of such an Height, that an ordinary Man could scarce reach their Knees. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries, *Calmer's* Dictionary, under the Word *Goliab*, and *Dissert.* of the Giants.

* The Words in which *Goliab's* Challenge is express'd, are these: ———— *Why are you come out to set your Battle in Array? Am I not a Philistine, and you Servants to Saul? Chuse you a Man for you, and let him come down to me: If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your Servants: But if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our Servants, and serve us*, 1 Sam. xvii. 8. Antiquity furnishes us with Examples of several such like Combats, as *Goliab* here proposes, but with none more remarkable, than that between the *Horatii* and *Curiatii*, related by *Livy*, lib. i. c. 23. "In which Case, (as *Grotius* expresses himself, *de Jure Belli & Pacis*, lib. ii. c. 23.) though the Champions perhaps cannot, with all the Innocence imaginable, engage in the Combat, yet their respective States may, at least, allow of it, as a less Evil; as an Expedient, whereby a Decision is made (without the Effusion of much Blood, or any considerable Loss on either Side) which of the two Nations shall have the Dominion over the other. *Strabo*, (says he) makes mention of this, as an antient Custom among the *Greeks*; and *Aeneas* appeals to the *Latins*, whether it is not highly just and equitable, that he and *Turnus* should determine the Controversy between them in this Manner?" But whether ever there was any Combat, stipulated to be decisive of the Quarrel between two contending Nations, 'tis certain, that this Speech of *Goliab's* was a mere *Bravado*, proceeding from an high Opinion he had of his own matchless Strength, as if he had been the whole Support of the Nation, which was to stand or fall together with him. For, that he had no Authority from the Princes of the *Philistines*, to make any such Declaration, is evident from the Event; since, so far were the *Philistines* from yielding themselves Slaves to the *Hebrews* upon the Death of this Champion, that they made the best of their Way into their own Country, and there defended themselves, and fought many Battles with them afterwards. *Saurin's* Dissert. Vol. IV. Dissert. 32. and *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

† In those Days it was customary for Men to serve their King and Country in the Wars at their own Expence; and therefore *Yessé* sent a Supply of Provisions to such of his Sons as were in the Service: But, since he had other Sons at Home, while *David* was chiefly in the Field, it seems to be a Divine Direction that he sent him from the Sheep upon this Errand.

† This was no bad Policy in *Saul*, to promise largely upon so important an Occasion, soasmuch as *Caleb* won *Kirjath-sepher*, by offering his Daughter in Marriage to the Person that should take it; and *David* himself, when he came to the Crown, encourag'd his Soldiers to assault the strong Fort of *Sion*, by promising to make him Commander in chief of all his Forces, who should first enter it. *Patrick's* Commentary.

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older, and stronger, and a Soldier from his Cradle. * But to this *David* reply'd, that he had already done as great Things, as killing this Giant could possibly be; that he had slain a Lion and a Bear with his bare Hands, and therefore did not doubt, but that the same Almighty Power, which deliver'd him then, would not fail to shield and protect him now.

SAUL was not a little pleas'd with this gallant Answer; and, to equip him, as well as he could, for the Combat, offer'd him his own Armour; but when *David* had put it on, he found it too large and cumbersome: And therefore taking only his Staff, a Sling, and † five smooth Stones, which he pick'd out of the Brook that ran by, he advanc'd towards the *Philistine*, who, perceiving him to be but a Youth, and of a fair effeminate Complexion, took the Thing, as done in Contempt and Derision of him; and therefore he curs'd him by his Gods, *Dagon* and *Asheroth*, and vow'd to cut him in Pieces, the very Moment he came at him. But *David's* Reply was of another Kind, *viz.* that he came against him, not in any Confidence of his own Strength, but in the Name of that God, whose Name he had blasphem'd,

and Power defy'd: And with these Words he let fly a Stone at him with such Force and Direction, that it hit him on his Forehead, and, † piercing his Brain, sunk into it; so that he fell flat on his Face, and *David* ran up to him, and with the Giant's Sword cut off his Head; at the Sight of which the *Philistine* Army fled, and were pursu'd by the *Hebrews* as far as the Gates of *Ekron* with a very great Slaughter.

WHEN *Saul* saw *David* marching against the *Philistine*, he enquir'd of *Abner*, who he was? Which *Abner* could not resolve him; but, upon his Return from Victory, introduc'd him to the King, with the Champion's Head in his Hand. The King receiv'd him with the highest Applauses; and, upon his Enquiry, *David* inform'd him, that he was the Son of *Jesse the Bethlehemite*. Every one entertain'd indeed an high Conception for the Author of so great an Action, but none express'd so entire a Satisfaction, as did *Jonathan*; who, being himself a Prince of extraordinary Bravery, was so taken with his Courage and Conduct in this Engagement, that he * contracted the tenderest and most endearing Friendship with

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Saul grows jealous of David, and attempts his Life several Ways.

* *Josephus* introduces *David* as reasoning with the King in this Manner: ——— “ *David*, perceiving, says he, that *Saul* took his Measures from the common Reason of other Encounters, gave the King to understand, that this was not so much a Challenge to the Army, as a Defiance to Heaven itself; neither was the Combat to be taken, in Truth, for a Trial of Skill between *Goliath* and *David*, but between *Goliath* and the Lord of Hosts. For it is not my Arm, says he, that fights the Battle, but the Power of a gracious and invincible God, that many Times brings to pass, even by the weakest Instruments, the noblest of his Divine Purposes, for his greater Glory.” *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vi. c. 10.

† Smooth Stones, one would think, part best from the Sling, and, as they meet with the least Obstruction from the Air, fly with the greatest Rapidity, and in the most direct Line; and yet *Ludovicus de Dieu* is of a quite contrary Opinion, *viz.* that rough and sharp Stones were properer for *David's* Purpose; whereupon he translates the Words, five Pieces of Stone, as the *Hebrew* indeed, without its Punctuation, will bear. But 'tis in vain to be nice and elaborate about Trifles, since, of what Form soever the Stone, which penetrated *Goliath's* Forehead, was, 'tis plain, that it had both the Direction, and Rapidity of its Motion from the Hand of God.

† If it should be ask'd, how this could possibly be, when *Goliath* was arm'd so compleatly, and, in particular, is said to have had an *Helmet of Brass upon his Head*? 'Tis but supposing, that this arrogant Champion, in Disdain of his inferior Combatant, might come negligently towards him, with his Helmet turn'd back, and his Forehead bare. 'Tis highly probable, that when he made his menacing Speech to *David*, he might turn back his Helmet, both to speak, and be heard more distinctly; and there was no such Terror in *David's* Appearance, as might induce him to cover his Forehead again. But, admitted he did, 'tis but supposing, that *David* levell'd his Stone so right, as to hit the Place, which was left open for his Adversary's Eyes, or threw it with such a violent Force, as would penetrate both Helmet and Head together. To make these Suppositions more probable, we need only remember what we read in *Judges*, Ch. xx. 16. of no less, than seven hundred Men in one Place, who were so expert with their Left Hands, that every one could sling Stones to an Hair's Breadth, and not miss; or what we read in *Diodorus Siculus*, l. 5. of some *Slingers*, who threw Stones with such a Violence, that nothing could resist their Impression; and that, when they made use of Lead instead of Stone, the very Lead would melt the Air, as it flew, by Reason of the Rapidity of the Motion which they gave it. *Patrick* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

* *Plutarch*, (in his Book *περὶ Ηεταυριλίας*) makes mention of several great Men, such as *Theseus* and *Perithous*; *Achilles* and *Patroclus*; *Orestes* and *Pylades*; *Pythias* and *Damon*; &c. who were join'd together in the Ties of Friendship.

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with him, which lasted as long as they two liv'd together; but in their Return home from this Expedition, one Thing happen'd, which occasion'd *Saul's* Jealousy. Among the Crowds, that came out to meet them, and to grace their Triumph, there was a *Chorus* of Women, who sung to the musical Instruments, upon which they play'd a certain Song, whose chief Burthen was, *Saul has slain his Thousands, and † David his ten Thousands*; which so enrag'd *Saul* against *David*, that from that Time he never look'd on him with a gracious Eye. For, tho' he thought proper to retain him in his Service, and, for the present, conferr'd on him some Command in the Army; yet the Reward for his killing *Goliath*, which was to be the Marriage of his eldest Daughter, † he depriv'd him of by giving her to another.

WHEN *Saul* return'd to his own House, the same Spirit of Melancholy came upon him, as before; and, while *David* was touching his Harp before him as usual, in order to alleviate his Malady, the outrageous King threw a Javelin at him with such Fury, as would certainly have destroy'd him, had not Providence turn'd it

aside. Hereupon *David* thought proper to withdraw; yet *Saul* would still continue him in his Service to have the more Opportunities against his Life. From 1 Sam. i. to the End.

It happen'd too, that, by this Time, his second Daughter (whose Name was *Michal*) had entertain'd kind Thoughts of *David*, which her Father was not unconscious of; and therefore he signify'd to him, that, upon Condition he would kill him an hundred *Philistines*, (but not without some Hopes of himself falling in the Attempt) he should have the Honour to become the King's Son-in-Law. *David* accepted the Condition, tho' he could not but perceive the latent Malice of it; and, taking some Choice Men along with him, invaded the *Philistines*, slew double the Number of them, and, for a Testimony thereof, † sent their *Foreskins* (according to Covenant) to the King; so that, all Things being thus gallantly accomplish'd, and in so publick a Manner, the King could not refuse him his Daughter, but, at the same Time, laid many other Schemes to take away his Life.

NAY to such desperate Lengths did his Jealousy run him, that he, casting off all Disguise, † commanded his Son *Jonathan*, David makes his Escape, and while Saul is among the Prophets, visits his Friend Jonathan.

as he calls it: But none of these were comparable to what we read of *Jonathan* and *David*, who enter'd into the most sacred Bonds of mutual Assistance and Defence, to their very Death, and of Kindness to their Posterity, even after either of them should be dead. *Jonathan*, in particular, through the whole Story, shows towards *David* such a Greatness of Soul, such a Constancy of Mind, and Disinterestedness of Heart, as few *Romances* can produce Examples of. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

† *Viz.* in his killing *Goliath*; for all the Conquest gain'd afterwards was no more than the Consequence of his Death.

† This was an high Affront to *David*, and one of the greatest Injuries, that could be done him; however, for the present, he thought proper to dissemble it. How *Jonathan* resented this Usage, we are no where told. It is likely, that his Duty to his Father made him prevail with *David* to take it patiently, as coming from a Man, who was sometimes besides himself, and knew not well what he did; and that *David* might be the more inclinable to do this, as having some Intimations given him of the good Esteem, which the second Daughter began to entertain of him. *Patrick's* Commentary.

† The Reason, why *Saul* exacted the *Foreskins* of *David* was to prevent all Cheat or Collusion in the Matter, and that he might be sure they were *Philistines* only, whom he kill'd. Had he demanded the Heads only of so many Men, *David*, (he might think) might perhaps cut off those of his own Subjects, and bring them instead of the *Philistines*: But now, the *Philistines* being the only neighbouring People, who were uncircumcis'd, (for the *Arabians*, as descended from *Ishmael*, and all the other Nations, which sprung from *Eshu*, were circumcis'd, as well as the *Hebrews*) in producing their *Foreskins*, there could be no Deception. Besides that, this would be a gross Insult upon the *Philistines* in general, to whom *Saul* was desirous to make *David* as odious as possible, that, at one Time or other, he might fall into their Hands. *Calmet's* Commentary.

† It is strange, that *Saul* should speak to *Jonathan* to murder *David*, if he knew the Friendship, he had for him; and he could not well be ignorant of it, since (in 1 Sam. 18. 3, 4.) he had made so publick a Declaration of it. But he imagin'd perhaps, that his Love to a Father would overcome his Love to a Friend; and (taking an Estimate from himself) might think it no mean Incitement to his Son, that *David* was going to deprive not only the Father of the present Possession, but the Son likewise the Right of Succession to the Throne of *Israel*. But whatever *Saul's* Reason,

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and some of the principal Men of his Court, at any Rate to dispatch *David*; which *Jonathan* all along took care to acquaint him with, and, at the same Time, advis'd him to provide himself with some Place of safe Retreat, until he should have an Opportunity of * expostulating the Matter with his Father, which accordingly he did, and with so good Success, that his Father was (seemingly at least) reconcil'd to *David*, and *Jonathan* next Day introduc'd him into his Presence: But the Increase of *David*'s Fame, upon several Defeats given the *Philistines*, still renewing, and increasing *Saul*'s Jealousy, would not suffer this Reconciliation to last long. *Saul* was taken with another Fit of Frenzy, and *David* was desir'd to play to him: But, while he was employ'd in tuning his Harp, the other took an Opportunity (as he had done before) of darting a Javelin at him, which *David*, having a watchful Eye upon him, nimbly declin'd, and so retir'd to his own House. Thither

the King sent his Guards, as soon as it was Light, to apprehend him; but by the Contrivance of his Wife *Michal* (who let him down from a Window) he made his Escape, and, by the Benefit of a dark Night, came to his old Friend *Samuel* at *Ramah*; to whom he told all his Complaints, and with whom (for the better Security of his Person) he went to *Najob*, which was * a School or College of the Prophets, and there dwelt.

It was not long before *Saul* had Intelligence of his Abode, and † sent a Party of Soldiers to apprehend him; but they, upon their Arrival at the Place, where they found *Samuel* teaching and instructing the younger Prophets, were seiz'd with a *prophetick Spirit*, and return'd not again. After these, he sent fresh Messengers, and after them, others again; but no sooner were they come within the *Verge* of the Place, but they all began to be affected in like Manner. *Saul* at length, impatient of these Delays, went himself; but as he drew

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might be for desiring *Jonathan*'s Assistance in so vile a Fact, 'tis plain, that there was a peculiar Providence of God in his disclosing himself so freely on this Head, since thereby *David* came to a right Information of his Danger. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* The Speech, which *Josephus* puts in *Jonathan*'s Mouth upon this Occasion, is express'd in these Terms:—
“ You have conceiv'd, Sir, a terrible Displeasure against this young Man, and given Orders for his Death; but upon what Provocation, or for what Fault, great or little, I cannot apprehend. He is a Person, to whom we stand indebted for our Safety, and the Destruction of the *Philistines*; for vindicating the Honour of our Nation from the Scandal of a forty Days Affront, in the Challenge of a Giant, whom not a Creature, but this innocent Youth, had a Heart to encounter; a Person, who purchas'd my Sister for his Wife at your own Price; and, in fine, a Person entitl'd to your Esteem and Tenderneſs, both a brave Man, and a Member of your own Family. Be pleas'd to consider then, what Injury you do your own Daughter in making her feel the Mortification of being a *Widow*, before she enjoys the Blessing of being a *Mother*. Be pleas'd to remember, who it was, that cur'd you of your dark melancholick Fits, and, by that Means, laid an Obligation upon the whole Family; and, who it was, that (next under God) deliver'd us from our implacable Enemies. These, Sir, are Benefits never to be forgotten, without the Infamy of the blackest Ingratitude.” *Jewish Antiq.* l. vi. c. 13.

* When these Schools of the Prophets were at first instituted is no where indicated in Scripture: But, as the first Mention we find of them is in *Samuel*'s Time, we can hardly suppose, that they were much superior to it. It may be presum'd therefore, that the sad Degeneracy of the Priesthood, at first occasion'd the Institution of these Places, for the better Education of those, that were to succeed in the sacred Ministry, whether as *Prophets*, or *Priests*. According to the Places, that are specify'd in Scripture, (1 Sam. x. 5. 10. and xix. 20. 2 Kings ii. 5. iv. 38. and xxii. 14.) they were first erected in the Cities of the *Levites*, which, for the more convenient Instruction of the People, were dispers'd up and down in the several Tribes of *Israel*. In these Places the *Prophets* had convenient Colleges built (whereof *Najob* seems to be one) for their Abode; and, living in Communities, had some one of distinguish'd Note (very probably by *divine Election*) set over them to be their Head or *President*. Here it was, that they study'd the Law, and learn'd to expound the several Precepts of it. Here it was, that, by previous Exercise, they qualify'd themselves for the Reception of the Spirit of *Prophecy*, whenever it should please God to send it upon them. Here it was, that they were instructed in the sacred Art of *Psalmody*, or (as the Scripture calls it, 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 7.) in *prophesying with Harps, with Psalteries, and Cymbals*: And hence it was, that, when any Blessings were to be promis'd, Judgments denounc'd, or extraordinary Events predicted, the Messengers were generally chosen: So that these Colleges were *Seminaries* of divine Knowledge, and Nurseries of that Race of Prophets, which succeeded from *Samuel* to the Time of *Malachi*. *Stillingsfleet's Orig. Sacra. Wheatly*, on the Schools of the Prophets, and *Jacob Abting*, de Repub. Heb.

† Such was *Saul*'s implacable Hatred to *David*, that it had abolish'd, not only all Respect and Reverence to *Samuel*, (under whose Protection *David* then was) but all Regard likewise to the College of the Prophets, which, in those Days had obtain'd the Privilege of a Sanctuary. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Grotius*, de Jure Belli & Pacis, l. 3. c. 11.

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drew near to *Najob*, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, so that he went along † *prophesying*, until he came to the Place, where *Samuel* and *David* were, and there, ‡ stripping himself of his upper Garments, he lay (as it were in an Extacy) almost naked on the Ground, all that Day and the next Night.

DAVID took this Opportunity to make a private Visit to his Friend *Jonathan*, with whom he expostulated his Father's Unkindness, which the other could no ways excuse, only he assur'd him of his best * Offices; that he would make what Discovery he could of his Father's

Designs against him, and not fail to acquaint him with them. In the mean Time he renew'd the League of Friendship that was between them, and directed him where to conceal himself for a Day or two, until he could learn, whether it was proper for him to appear or no; which he was to signify to him by his shooting some Arrows, in such a Manner, as they concluded on, and so mutually embracing they parted.

† THE Feast of the New-Moon was now come, which *Saul* return'd from *Najob* to celebrate; but, as he observ'd that * *David's* Seat at the Table had for

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

Who, upon his
Account, had
ran the hazard
of his Life.

† This is a Word of an extensive Signification, and may denote sometimes such Actions, Motions, and Distortions, as Prophets, in their Inspirations, are wont to express.

Increta qualis Entheos curfus tulit,

Cum jam recepto Mænas insanit Deo.

SEN. in Medea.

Which perhaps may be very justly apply'd to *Saul* upon this Occasion. But the Generality of Interpreters, in this Place, take *prophesying* to signify *Saul's* singing of Psalms, or Hymns of Thanksgiving and Praise, which even against his Will he was compell'd to do, to teach him the Vanity of his Designs against *David*, and that in them he fought against God himself. *Calmet's* Commentary on 1 Sam. xviii. 10. and *Poole's* Annotations on xix. 23.

‡ The Words in our Translation are, ———— *And he stript off his Cloaths also, and lay down naked, all that Day, and all that Night*, 1 Sam. xix. 24. In which Words, and some other Portions of the like Import, we are not to imagine, that the Persons there spoken of were entirely *naked*, but only that they were divested of some external Habit or other, which, upon certain Occasions, they might lay aside. For, whereas it is said of some Prophets, *Ija. xx. 2.* and *Mic. i. 8.* that they went about *naked*, we can hardly think that they could be guilty of so much Indecency, and especially by the express Order of God, who had always testify'd his Abhorrence of *Nudity*, and enjoin'd his Priests the Use of several Garments to cover the Body, that thus they might be distinguish'd from the *Pagan* Priests, who were not asham'd to appear naked. The Words in the Original therefore, which we render *naked*, or *to be naked*, signify no more, than either to have Part of the Body uncover'd, or to be without a Gown, or upper Garment, which the *Romans* call'd *Toga*, and (according to the Custom of the *Eastern* People) was wont to be put on when they went abroad, or made any publick Appearance. And therefore it was some such Vestment as this, or perhaps his Military Accoutrements, which *Saul*, upon this Occasion, put off; and that this was enough to denominate him *naked*, is manifest from what *Aurelius Victor*, speaking of those who were sent to *Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus*, to bring him to the Senate to be made Dictator, says, That they found him *naked*, plowing on the other Side of the *Tyber*; whereas *Livy*, who relates the same Story, observes, that he call'd to his Wife *Rucca*, for his Gown, or *Toga*, that he might appear fit to keep them Company. Essay towards a new Translation.

* The Speech which *Josephus* puts in *Jonathan's* Mouth, upon this Occasion, is very tender and *pathetick*: ————
“ That God, who fills and governs the Universe, and knows the Thoughts of my Heart in the very Conception of them;
“ that God, *says he*, be Witness to the Faith, that is vow'd and promis'd betwixt us; and that I will never give over searching into, and sifting the private Deliberations, and Purposes of my Father, till I shall have discover'd the Bottom of his Heart, and whether there be any secret Rancour in his Thoughts, or not, that may work to your Prejudice:
“ And if I shall be able to make any Thing out at last, whether it be for, or against you, it shall be the first Thing I do to give you Information of it. The Searcher of Hearts will bear me Witness that this is true, and that I have ever made it my earnest Prayer to Almighty God, to bless, and prosper you in your Person and Designs; and you may assure yourself, that he will be as gracious to you for the future, as he has been hitherto, and lay all your Enemies at your Feet. In the mean while, pray be sure to keep these Things in Memory, and when I am gone, to take care of my poor Children.” *Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. c. 14.*

† The *Jewish* Months were *Lunar*, and never began before the Moon appear'd above the Horizon; for which Purpose, there were certain Persons plac'd upon the Mountains, some Time before the new Moon was expected, to give Notice by the Sound of an Horn when it first appear'd, that so the News thereof might immediately be carry'd to *Jerusalem*. But lest there should be any Mistake in this Method of making their Observation, from this Example of *Saul's*, it is suppos'd, that they celebrated this Festival for two Days together. Whether the *Heathens* had this Rite from the *Jews* or no, 'tis certain, that other Nations had Feasts at the Beginning of every Month, and that, with the *Romans*, the *Calends* in particular were festival Days, consecrated to *Juno*, to whom Sacrifices at this Time were offer'd. *Calmet's* Commentary.

* That sitting at Table was an antienter Custom, than either lying or leaning at Meat, is obvious from this Passage. The *Egyptians*, when they eat at *Joseph's* Entertainment, sat at Table, and so did the *Hebrews*. *Homer* always intro-

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two Days been empty, he enquir'd of *Jonathan*, † what was become of *the Son of Jesse*, as he call'd him in Contempt. *Jonathan* told him, that he had given him Leave to go to an *anniversary* Feast of his Family at *Betlehem*; whereupon *Saul*, suspecting very probably the Reality of his Answer, fell into a Passion with his Son, and upbraided him with his Friendship for *David*, which (as he told him) would prove fatal to himself, and injurious to his Succession; and therefore he commanded him to produce him; for resolv'd he was, that this *Rival* of theirs should die. *Jonathan* was going to interpose something in Vindication of his Friend, and the Unreasonableness of his Father's Indignation against him; which provok'd his Father to such a Degree, that, forgetting all Ties

of paternal Love, † he threw a Javelin at him with an Intent to kill him. But he avoided the Blow, and retir'd; and, the next Morning, went into the Fields, under Pretence of shooting with his Bow and Arrows, to give *David* the Signal. To him he communicated all that had pass'd between his Father and him; that his Father was implacable, and determin'd to destroy him, and therefore he advis'd him to escape for his Life: And so, having made new Protestations to each other of perpetual Friendship, they embrac'd, and parted.

EVER after this *David* was banish'd from Court, and liv'd in the Nature of an *Out-Law*. The first Place that he betook himself to was † *Nob*, where stood the Tabernacle at that Time, and where ||

Abimelech

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

David's flying
from Place to
Place for Shelter
against
Saul.

duces his Heroes in this Posture; and that this was the known Custom among the antient People of *Italy*, *Virgil*, in these Words, testifies:

Perpetuis soliti Patres confidere Menfis. *Aene. vii.*

It is not to be dissembled however, that very early, and even in the Times of *Saul*, the Use of Table-Beds, or Beds to lie, or lean upon at Meals, had obtain'd among the *Jews*; for when the Witch of *Endor*, with much Entreaty, prevail'd with *Saul* to take a little Refreshment, 'tis said, that *he arose from the Earth, and sat upon the Bed*, 1 Sam. xxviii. 23. *Calmet's Commentary.*

† It may seem a little strange, that *Saul*, who had so often endeavour'd to kill *David*, and was now just return'd from an Expedition undertaken against his Life, should ever expect to see him at his Table any more. But he might think perhaps, that *David* was inclinable to overlook all that had pass'd, as the Effect of his Frenzy and Melancholy; that now he had been prophesying at *Najob*, he was return'd to a sound Mind, and become a new Man; and that, because, after the first Javelin darted at him, *David* had ventur'd into his Presence again, he might, for the future, be guilty of the like Indiscretion. *Calmet's Commentary.*

† If it be ask'd, how it came to pass, that *Saul* always had a Javelin or Spear in Readiness, (as on this, and other Occasions) to execute his evil Purposes? The Answer is, that Spears were the Sceptres of those Ages, which Kings always carry'd in their Hands. That they always carry'd the Sceptres in their Hands appears from *Homer*, and that these Sceptres were Spears is evident from *Justin*, (lib. xxiii. c. 3.) where, speaking of the first Age of the *Romans*, (which *Dr Patrick* thinks was about the Age of *Saul*) he tells us, that, as yet, in these Times, Kings had Spears, as Ensigns of Royalty, which the *Greeks* call'd Sceptres. The *Life of David*, by the Author of the *Revelation examin'd.*

† There is mention made of two Cities of this Name, one on the East, or further Side, and the other on the West, or hither Side of *Jordan*. The Generality of Interpreters will have the City here specify'd, to be that which stood on the West Side, and in the Tribe of *Benjamin*. Tho' it is not reckon'd among the Number of the Cities, that were at first assign'd to the Priests, yet, that it afterwards became one of the sacerdotal Towns, and especially (as we may imagine) when the Tabernacle came to be mov'd thither, is evident from 1 Sam. xxii. 19. and *Nehem.* xi. 32. and some suppose it stood about four Leagues from *Gibeab*. *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Wall's Geography* of the Old Testament, Vol. III.

|| The Words of our Blessed Saviour, in *Mark* ii. 25. are these, ——— Have ye never read what *David* did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him, how he went into the House of God, in the Days of *Abiathar*, the High-Priest, and did eat the Shew-Bread, and gave also to them that were with him? Now there are two Things, which the Author of this Book of *Samuel* asserts, quite contrary to what our Saviour declares, viz. 1st, That *David* was alone, and no Man with him, Chap. xxi. 1. And 2dly, That *Abimelech* was at that Time High-Priest; whereas our Saviour affirms, both that *David* had Company along with him, and that *Abiathar* was then in the Pontificate. Now, 1st, That *David* had Company with him, and that *Abimelech* knew it, is evident from his Words in the fourth Verse; *There is no common Bread in my Hand, but there is hallowed Bread*, if the young Men have kept themselves at least from Women; and therefore *Abimelech's* Meaning must be, that *David* had no Guards to attend him, as it was usual for Persons of his Quality to have; or, at least, those that were with him might be order'd to keep at a Distance, and so *Abimelech* (when he utter'd these Words) might not see them, tho', when he came into a closer Conference with *David*, *David* might inform him, what Retinue he had brought, and consequently, that all the Shew-Bread was no

more.

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Abimelech was High-Priest; but, as he had no Attendants, he pretended to *Abimelech*, that he was sent by the King upon † a Business of such Dispatch, that he had Time neither to take Arms, nor Provision with him, and therefore had obtain'd of the High-Priest, * *Goliath's* Sword, which had been deposited in the Tabernacle, and some of the *Shew-Bread*, which, the Day before, had been taken off from the *Golden Table*, and with these he proceeded to *Gath*, as not thinking himself safe in any Part of *Saul's* Dominions.

HE had not been long in *Gath* however, before he was discover'd, and the King inform'd of his being that great Man of War in *Israel*, who had so often defeated, and destroy'd the *Philistines*; so that, to get clear of this Information, he was forc'd to counterfeit *Madness*, and an *Epilepsy*, which he did so artfully, that, by this Means, he evaded the Suspicion of the King, and made his Escape to † *Adullam*,

a Town in the Tribe of *Judah*, where his Brethren and Relations, together with many Malecontents, and Men of desperate Fortunes met him, and made up a little Army of about four hundred in Number. From 1 Sam. i. to the End.

AFTER his Family had thus join'd him, he could not but be apprehensive, that the Wrath of *Saul* would fall upon his aged Parents, and therefore his next Care was to provide them with a safe Retreat; which he did by putting both himself and them under the Protection of the King of *Moab*, who was then at Enmity with *Saul*. And with his Parents he thus continu'd, until the Prophet *Gad* (who attended him) advis'd him to leave *Moab*, and to return into the Land of *Judah*; which accordingly he did, and took up his Station in the † Forest of *Hareth*, where *Abiathar* the Priest came to him, and, upon this sad Occasion, brought along with him all the pontifical Ornaments.

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more, than what they wanted for their present Support. zdly, Tho' it be granted that the Name of *High-Priest*, in its strictest Sense, did not at this Time belong to *Abiathar*, yet since it is generally agreed, that he was the *Sagan*, (as the *Jews* of latter Days call him, who is the High-Priest's *Vicar*) he might well enough (in a qualify'd Sense) be called the *High-Priest*; especially considering his immediate Succession to his Father, and how short his Father's Continuance in the Office was, after this Interview with *David*. Nor can we see any great Impropriety in saying, that such a Thing was done in the Days of *Abiathar* the *High-Priest*, tho' done somewhat before he was invested with that Dignity; any more than in saying, that such a Thing happen'd in the Days of *Henry VIII.* which strictly came to pass some Days before he began to reign. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† It must be own'd, that *David*, in this Pretence, did not speak direct Truth, nor are we from hence to take an Example for speaking Lyes; but one Thing may be said in his Excuse, that, as he saw *Doeg* there, who he knew would inform *Saul* of what pass'd between him and *Abimelech*, his Pretence of Business was on purpose to furnish the High-Priest (if he were called to an Account) with a better Apology for his Reception of *David*, since he knew no other, but that he came Express from the King: And accordingly we may observe, that *Abimelech* insists on that chiefly. 'Tis a melancholy Consideration, however, that the Wickedness of the World should be such, as to put even excellent Men sometimes upon the Necessity of Lying to preserve their Lives, which cannot be safe without it. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* It was an ancient Custom, not only among the *Jews*, but the *Heathens* likewise, to hang up the Arms that were taken from their Enemies in their Temples; and in Conformity hereunto, the Sword wherewith he cut off *Goliath's* Head *David* dedicated to the Lord, and deliver'd to the Priest, to be kept as a Monument of his Victory, and of the *Israelites* Deliverance. And, as it was customary to hang up Arms in the Temples, so, when the Occasions of the State requir'd it, it was no unusual Thing to take them down, and employ them in the publick Service; from whence came that Saying of *Seneca*, *pro Republicâ plerumque Templâ nudant.* *Calmet's Commentary.*

† It was a Town in the Tribe of *Judah*, of some considerable Note in the Days of *Eusebius*, and about ten Miles from *Eleutheropolis* Eastward, where there was a Rock of the same Name, in which was a Cave, naturally strong and well fortify'd, to which *David* retreated; as indeed most of the Mountains of *Palestine* were full of Caverns, whither the Country People generally betook themselves for Safety in Time of War. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries. *Well's* Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. II.

† Both St *Jerom* and *Eusebius*, make mention of a Place of this Name in the Tribe of *Judah*, lying Westward of *Jerusalem*; of which *Rabbi Solomon* (upon the Credit of some ancient Tradition) says, that, being before dry, barren, and impassable, upon *David's* coming, it became fruitful and irriguous, and that in the xxiii^d *Psalms* (where he considers God as his Shepherd, who would lead him into fruitful Pastures, and under his Protection, keep him safe in the most dangerous Scenes) he alludes to this, *He shall feed me in a green Pasture, and lead me forth by the Waters of Comfort*: For surely it is not impossible, but that this, which was before a barren Desert, might now, by a singular Blessing from God upon the Industry of *David* and his Companions, become a green and well-water'd Pasture. *Well's* Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. III. and *The History of David*, by the Author of *Revelation* examin'd.

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Who slew Ahimelech the High-Priest, and diverse others, upon his Account.

DURING David's short Stay at *Nob*, *Doeg*, the King's principal Herdsman, was there, and, upon his Return to Court, gave *Saul* Information of all that had pass'd between the High-Priest *Abimelech*, and *David*. Hereupon *Saul* sent for *Abimelech*, and the rest of the Priests, and, having accus'd them of a Conspiracy, and traitorous Practices against him, (* notwithstanding all the High-Priest could say, in Vindication of himself, and his Brethren) he command'd them to be put to Death. His Guards, who stood by, and heard *Abimelech's* Defence, * would not undertake so barbarous an Office; but *Doeg*, who had been their *Accuser*, at the King's Command, became their *Executioner*, and, with his sacrilegious Hand, slew no less, than || *eighty-five* of them. Nor did *Saul's* bloody Resentment stop here: * For, sending a Party to *Nob*,

he commanded them to kill Man, Woman, ^{From 1 Sath. i to the End:} and Child, and even every living Creature; so that, of all the Children of *Abimelech*, none escap'd, but *Abiathar*, (as we said before) who came to *David*, and told him the dismal Tidings of this Massacre; which *David* could not but sadly condole, and, in some Measure, look upon himself as the innocent Occasion of it. However he gave *Abiathar* Assurances of his Protection, that he should share the same Fate with him; and that, with his own Life, he would shield him from all Danger.

WHILE *Saul* was imbruing his Hands in the innocent Blood of his Subjects, *David* was employing his Arms in the necessary Defence of his Country; for, hearing that the *Philistines* had made an Incursion upon *Keilah*, a City of *Judah*, † he went, and reliev'd the Place, repuls'd the Enemy with a great Loss of Men, and took

And pursues David into several Places, but is still disappointed.

* The Speech, which *Josephus* draws up for the High-Priest, upon this Occasion, is directed to *Saul*, and conceiv'd in these Words: "I did not receive *David* as your Majesty's Enemy, but as the faithfullest of your Friends and Officers, and (what is more) in the Quality of your Son too, and a Relation in so tender a Degree of Affinity and Alliance. For how should any Body imagine that Man to be your Enemy, upon whom you have conferr'd so many Honours? Or why should not I rather presume such a Person, without any further Enquiry, to be your singular Friend? — He told me, that he was sent in haste by yourself, upon earnest Business; and if I had not supply'd him with what he wanted, it would have reflected an Indignity upon yourself, rather than upon him. Wherefore, I hope, that the Blame will not fall upon me, even tho' *David* should be found as culpable, as you suspect him; unless an Act of pure Compassion and Humanity, abstracted from the least Thought, Knowledge, or Imagination of any evil Intention, shall be understood to make me privy to a Conspiracy: For the Service I did him, was Matter of Respect to the King's Son-in-Law, and the King's military Officer, not to the Person or Interest of *David*." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vi. cap. 14.

* In this they were to be commended: But much more Praise they would have deserv'd, if they had offer'd up their Petitions for these innocent People; if they had remonstrated to the King, that he was going to commit a Thing, that was contrary to all Laws, both *divine* and *human*; and if (when they saw, that neither their Reasons nor Petitions avail'd) they had look'd upon this Order, as the Effect of one of the King's distracted Fits, and accordingly seiz'd and secur'd him, until the Priests had made their Escape, and he return'd to a better Mind. For to stand wringing their Hands, while they saw so many innocent Creatures murder'd, and foreign Soldiers made the Instruments of the King's Cruelty, was much the same Thing, as to betray all divine and human Rights merely to please a Tyrant. *Le Clerc's Commentary*, Vide *Josephus's Jewish Antiq.* lib. vi. cap. 14. who has, upon this Occasion, a curious Descant about the Abuse of Power in Kings; when once from a low, they come to be exalted to an high Station in Life.

|| The *Septuagint*, as well as the *Syrian Version*, makes the Number of Priests, slain by *Doeg*, to be *three hundred and five*, and *Josephus* three hundred and eighty-five, which is a large Variation from the *Hebrew Text*. *Millar's History of the Church*.

* This Party, as *Josephus* informs us, was commanded by *Doeg*, the vile Informer and Murderer, who taking some Men, as wicked as himself, to his Assistance, slew in all *three hundred and eighty-five Persons*, and, in Addition to these, 'tis thought by some, that the *Gibeonites*, (upon whose Account there was so sore a Famine in the Days of *David*) who might now be at *Nob*, in Attendance upon the Priests, were at this Time slain. 'Tis certain, *Saul* was now become a mere Tyrant, and against those poor People acted more cruelly, than he did against the *Amalekites*, some of whom he spar'd, even contrary to God's Command; but in this Case he let none escape, on purpose to deter others from giving the least Shelter or Assistance to *David*, and to incite them the rather to come, and give him Information, wherever his Haunts, or Lurking-Places were. *Josephus's Antiq.* lib. vi. c. 14.

† We read of no Embassy, that the People of *Keilah* sent to *David* to desire his Assistance, nor of any particular Affection they had for him; and therefore we may suppose, that *David* undertook this Expedition, out of pure Love to his Countrymen, to let the World see, how serviceable he could be to them, in Case he was restored to his Dignity again, and that (what ill Treatment soever he should meet with from the Hand of *Saul*) nothing should provoke him to abandon his Love for his Country. *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

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took from them a considerable Booty of Cattle. *Saul* had soon Intelligence of this Action; and supposing that *David* would now fortify himself in this strong Hold, he sent an Army to invest it: But *David*, having consulted the Divine Oracle upon this Emergency, found that the Inhabitants of the Place would prove perfidious to him, and therefore he left them, and retir'd into a Wood in the † Deserts of *Ziph*, whither *Saul*, for Want of Intelligence, could not pursue him; but his Son *Jonathan*, having private Notice sent him, went to him, and gave him all the Comfort and Encouragement that he could; assuring him, that his Father's Malice would never reach him; that he still hop'd to see him King of *Israel*, and himself his *second*; and with these Words, confirming the Covenant of Friendship between them, they embrac'd and parted.

THE People of the Wilderness were very officious in sending *Saul* Intelligence where *David* was, and (if he would supply them with a sufficient Force) undertook to betray him into his Hands: But *David*, having taken Notice of their intended Treachery, retir'd farther into the Desert of *Maon*, whither *Saul* pursu'd him, and press'd him so close, that there

was but a Valley between the two Armies. *David's* Army was so very small, that *Saul* was thinking of encompassing the Mountain, where he encamp'd, in order to prevent his Escape; when News was brought him, that the *Philistines* had invaded the Country on the other Side, so that he was forc'd to drop his private Resentment for the publick Weal, and divert his Arms another Way: But, as soon as the *Philistines* were repuls'd, he, with three Thousand choice Men, renewed his Pursuit of *David*, who by this Time was retir'd into the strong Holds of † *Engedi*. From 1 Sam. i. to the End.

As *Saul* was on his March, he happen'd to turn into a Cave to ease Nature, where *David*, and some of his Men lay hid. His Men, when they saw the King entering alone, thought it a lucky Opportunity, that Providence had put in their Hands, and accordingly instigated *David* to dispatch him: But *David* rejected the Offer with Abhorrence, * *God forbid that I should stretch forth my Hand against the Lord's Anointed*; and only (to shew *Saul* how much he was in his Power) went softly, and † cut off the Skirt of his Robe. When *Saul* was gone out of the Cave, *David* call'd to him at a Distance, and,

† In *Josua*, xv. 55. we read of a Town of this Name, where Mention is likewise made of *Carmel*, and *Maon*, and therefore it probably was adjacent to them. And here, in the Story of *David*, we find *Carmel* and *Maon* mention'd as adjoining to *Ziph*; so that, it is not to be doubted but that by the *Ziph* in the Wilderness, where *David* now conceal'd himself, we are to understand the *Ziph*, which was in the Neighbourhood of *Carmel*, and *Maon*, in the southern Part of the Tribe of *Judah*, and (according to St *Jerom*) about eight Miles eastward from *Hebron*. *Wells's Geogr. of the Old Testament*, Vol. III.

† *Engedi*, (now called *Anguedi*) in the Days of St *Jerom*, was a large Village, situate in the Deserts, which lay upon the western Coasts of the *Salt* or *Dead Sea*, not very far from the Plains of *Jericho*: And, as the Country thereabouts abounded with Mountains, and these Mountains had Plenty of vast Caves in them, it was a very commodious Place for *David* to retire to, and conceal himself in. *Eusebius* makes it famous for excellent *Balm*; and *Solomon* in his Song, for Vineyards, which, in all Probability, were planted by his Father, during his Retirement in this Place, and therefore so peculiarly celebrated by the Son. *Calmet's Commentary*, *Wells's Geogr. of the Old Testament*, Vol. III. and *The History of King David*, by the Author of *Revelation Examind*.

* This one Example of *David's*, under all the Provocations, he receiv'd from *Saul*, abundantly shews us, that the Persons of Kings are sacred and inviolable.

Regum timendorum in proprios Greces,

Reges in ipsos Imperium est Jovis.

HOR. Od.

† If it be ask'd, how *David* could do this without *Saul's* perceiving it? The Answer may be, that this possibly might be some upper loose Garment, which *Saul* might put off, and lay aside at some Distance from him, upon this Occasion; and that, as there were several Rooms, or particular Cells, in these large Caverns, which might have secret Passages from one another, *Saul*, at the Mouth of one of these Cells, might lay down this upper Garment, which *David* perceiving, and knowing all the Passages of the Place, might go some secret Way, and cut off some small Part of it. Nor could the Noise, which *David's* Motion might make, be well heard by *Saul*, because it must have been drown'd by a much greater Noise, which *Saul's* Army, waiting for him at the Mouth of the Cave, may be suppos'd to make. *Pool's Annotations*.

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and, shewing him the Skirt of his Raiment declar'd his Innocence in such tender Terms, and with such submissive Behaviour, that he made the King's Heart relent. So that, with the utmost Compunction, he acknowledg'd his Guilt in thus persecuting the Just; and, from the many Escapes, which God had vouchsaf'd *David*, concluding assuredly that he was to succeed in the Kingdom, he conjur'd him, by all that was sacred, || not to destroy his Family; and, having obtain'd this Promise, he return'd home: But *David*, * not daring to trust to his fair Words, still kept himself close in the Fastnesses of the Hills.

MUCH about this Time † the Prophet *Samuel* dy'd, and was bury'd at *Ramah*, the Place of his Habitation, in great Solemnity, and † with the general Lamen-

tation of the People: During which Time, *David* took the Opportunity to remove from *En-gedi*, and to retire farther into the Wilderness of *Paran*, not far from *Maon*, where he had been once before.

IN the neighbourhood of this Place, there liv'd a wealthy Man, whose Name was *Nabal*, but himself was of a surly and morose Disposition. While *David* abode in this Wilderness the Time before, he had taken great Care to restrain his Men from doing any Injury to *Nabal's* Flocks, and now, in the Time of his *Sheep-sheering*, (which, in these Countries, was always a Season of great Festivity and Entertainment) he sent Messengers to him, that, in Consideration of the many *Civilities*, he had shewn him, he would be pleas'd to send some Provisions for the Support of his Army. But *Nabal* receiv'd the Messengers

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End

David's Interview with
Abigail, Nabal's Wife,
whom he afterwards mar-
ries.

|| But how did *David* absolve his Promise, or keep his Oath with *Saul*, when, in 2 Sam. xxi. 8. he slew so many of his Sons? The Reply, that is usually made to this, is, — That this Promise, or Oath of *David's*, could never be *absolute* or *unconditional*, because, upon Supposition that any of *Saul's* Family had become *rebellious*, they had nevertheless been obnoxious to the Sword of Justice; that, tho' *David* could bind himself with his Oath, yet he could not bind God, to whose Will and Pleasure all private Obligations must be submitted; and (what is more) that this Execution was not done by *David's* Order, but at the Desire of the *Gibeonites*, to whom God had promis'd that Satisfaction should be made for *Saul's* bloody Endeavours to destroy them. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Pool's* Annotations.

* 'Tis an old Saying, and a wise one, μέμνησο ἀπιστεῖν, Remember not to be too credulous; and the Advice of the Son of *Sirach* is this, — Never trust thine Enemy; tho' he humble himself, yet take good Heed, and beware of him. *Ecclef. xii. 10, 11.*

† The *Jews* are of Opinion that *Samuel* died only four Months before *Saul*: But, by the Generality of Christian *Chronologers*, he is suppos'd to have died about two Years before the Death of that Prince, and in the ninety-eighth Year of his Age; twenty of which had been spent in the Government of *Israel* (tho' Sir *John Marbham* will have it no more than sixteen) before *Saul's* Inauguration, after which, he liv'd about eighteen. He was at first interr'd at *Ramah*, but, in the Time of the Emperor *Arcadius*, his Body was transported from *Palestine* to *Constantinople*; and (as St *Jerom* informs us) receiv'd both by the Clergy and Laity with a Joy unspeakable, and Honours almost infinite. He was indeed, while he liv'd, an excellent Governor, and, through his whole Administration, above Vanity, Corruption, or any private Views. Those, that attend to his Life, may observe, that he was modest without Meanness, mild without Weakness, firm without Obstinacy, and severe without Harshness; or, as the Author of *Ecclesiasticus* has recorded his Actions, and consecrated this Eulogy to his Memory: — Samuel, the Prophet of the Lord, says he, beloved of the Lord, established a Kingdom, and anointed Princes over his People. By the Law of the Lord he judged the Congregation, and the Lord had Respect unto Jacob. By his Faithfulness he was found a true Prophet, and by his Word he was known to be faithful in Vision. He called upon the mighty God, when his Enemies pressed upon him on every Side, when he offered the sucking Lamb; and the Lord thundred from Heaven, and with a great Noise made his Voice to be heard. He destroyed the Rulers of the Syrians, and all the Princes of the Philistines. Before his long Sleep, he made Protestations in the Sight of the Lord, and his Anointed, and after his Death he prophesied, and shewed the King his End. *Ecclef. xvi. 13, &c.* But, besides the Things that are recorded of this Prophet in the first Book of *Samuel*, there are some other Passages concerning him in the first Book of *Chronicles*; as, That he enriched the Tabernacle with several Spoils, which he took from the Enemies of *Israel* during his Administration, Chap. xxvi. 28. That he assisted in regulating the Distribution of the *Lewites*, which *David* afterwards prescribed for the Service of the Temple, Chap. ix. 22. And lastly, that he wrote the History of *David*, in Conjunction with the Prophet *Nathan* and *Gad*: But, as he was dead before *David* came to the Throne, this can be meant only of the Beginning of that History, which by the other two Prophets might be continu'd and concluded. There is great Probability indeed, that he compos'd the twenty-four first Chapters of the first Book of *Samuel*, which contains the Beginning of *David's* Life, and several historical Facts, wherein he himself had a large Share; but as for the latter Part of it, it was impossible for him to write it, because, in the Beginning of the xxvth Chapter, there is Mention made of his Death.

† When they saw the Disorders of *Saul's* Reign, they had great Reason to lament their Loss of *Samuel*, and their Sin, in rejecting so great a Prophet, and so good a Magistrate. *Millo's History of the Church.*

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gers very rudely, and, with some opprobrious Reflections upon *David* himself, sent them away empty, which so exasperated *David*, that, in the Heat of his Resentment, he vow'd to destroy all *Nabal's* Family before next Morning, and with this Resolution he set forward: But *Abigail*, *Nabal's* Wife, who was a very beautiful Woman, and in Temper the very reverse to her Husband, being inform'd by her Servant of what had pass'd, took this Expedient to divert his Ire.

SHE order'd her Servants immediately to pack up two hundred Loaves of Bread, || two Bottles of Wine, five Sheep ready dress'd, five Measures of parch'd Corn, an hundred Clusters of Raisins, and two hundred Cakes of Figs; and with this Present she made haste to meet *David*. *David* was marching with all Speed, to put in Execution his rash Vow; but *Abigail*, when she met him, approach'd him with that Respect, and address'd him † in such moving Language, that she soon dis-

arm'd him of his Rage, and stopp'd the Effects of his Indignation, so that they both parted with mutual Satisfaction; *he*, for being thus prevented from shedding of Blood, and *she*, for having thus happily succeeded in her Embassy.

WHEN she got home, she found her Husband rioting and drinking; so that she deferr'd telling him of what had pass'd, until he was a little soberer the next Morning. But when he came to understand the Danger he had been in, he was so terrify'd at the Thoughts of it, that || he turn'd quite stupid, and, in the Space of ten Days, died: Whereupon *David* sent for his Wife, and marry'd her, as he did likewise another Woman, whose Name was *Abinoam* a *Jezreelite*; for his first Wife, who was *Saul's* Daughter, by her Father's Command, † was at this Time given to another.

THE *Ziphites* (as we said before) were always forward to give *Saul* Information, where *David* and his Men were conceal'd; and

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

His saving
King Saul,
when he was
in his Power.

|| It must be obvious to every Reader, that *two Bottles of Wine* would bear no Proportion to the other Parts of the Present, nor answer the Exigencies, which *David's* Army might be in, if they be understood of such Bottles as are now commonly in Use with us: But, in these *Eastern* Countries, they us'd to carry and keep their Wine and Water in Leathern Bags, made on Purpose to hold liquid Things, which Vessels they call'd, or (at least) we translate them, *Bottles*. Such were the Bottles which the *Gibeonites* brought to *Joshua's* Camp, which they said were worn out, and torn in their pretended long Journey, *Josh. ix. 13*. And of such as those it is not unlikely, that our Saviour speaks, *Matth. ix. 17*. where, in the marginal Note of our old Bible, *Bottles* are explain'd by Bags of Leather, two Skins or Borachios, wherein Wine was carry'd on Asses or Camels: And that two such Vessels as these might hold a Quantity of Wine proportionate to the rest of the Present, which *Abigail* carry'd with her, needs not to be disputed. *Howell's* History, in the Notes.

† The Speech, which the sacred Historian puts in *Abigail's* Mouth, upon this Occasion, is certainly an artful Piece of Eloquence, full of fine Turns and Insinuations; nor is that of *Josephus*, especially in the Conclusion, much amiss; — “ Be pleas'd, Sir, I beseech you, to accept of the good Will of your poor Servant in these small Presents, and, upon my humble Request, to pass over the Offence of my Husband, who has so justly incurr'd your Displeasure; for there is nothing so well becoming the Character of a Person, whom Providence designs for a Crown, as Clemency and Compassion.” *Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. c. 14*.

|| The Words in the Original are, *He became a Stone*, but our Translation has wisely supply'd the Particle *as*, which should always be done, when the Scripture ascribes something of another, that is not absolutely of the same Nature. We may observe however, that this Manner of Expression is very common among profane Authors. Thus *Ovid* brings in *Ariadne* expressing her Grief and Astonishment at the Loss of *Theseus*, who had left her in the Island *Dia*:

Aut Mare prospiciens in Saxo frigida sedi,

Quamque Lapis sedes, tam Lapis ipsa fui.

The like Expression is us'd of *Heenba*, when she saw the dead Body of her Son *Polydorus*:

— duroque simillima Saxo

Torpet.

But in the Case of *Niobe*, who is said to be turn'd into a Statue of Stone, *Cicero*, in his *Tusculan Questions*, observes, that this Fable only represents her perpetual Silence in Mourning: And accordingly *Josephus* tells us of *Nabal*, that, when his Wife told him of the Danger he had escap'd, he was struck with such an Astonishment, that he fell into a dead Numbness all over his Body, of which he soon died. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and *Disert. de Statuâ Salis*.

† The Reason of *Saul's* putting this Indignity upon *David*, was to extinguish, as far as he could, all Relation and Kindred, and to cut off his Hopes and Pretences to the Crown upon that Account: But, as the *Jewish* Doctors are of Opinion, that this *Phalti*, to whom she was given, was a very pious Man, and would never approach her, because she was another Man's Wife, and as *David* had never been divorc'd from her, he receiv'd her again, when he came to the Throne. *Peol's* Annotations, and *Calmet's* Commentary.

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and therefore, understanding from them, that he was somewhere about the Mountain *Hachilah* †, he took three Thousand Men; and went in Quest of him. *David* had Intelligence where *Saul's* Army lay encamp'd; and therefore going, first of all privately himself, to reconnoitre it, he † took with him at Night his Nephew *Abishai*, and, entering the Camp, found *Saul*, and *Abner*, and all the rest of the Host, fast asleep. *Abishai* would have gladly made use of this Opportunity to dispatch the King, but *David* would by no Means permit him, for the same Reasons that he had sav'd his Life in the Cave; only the * Spear, and Cruise of Water, that were at his Bed's Head, he bid him bring with him, that he might shew the King how much his Life had been at his Mercy: And, accordingly, when they got at a convenient Distance, *David*, with a loud Voice, call'd unto *Abner*, and, in an † ironical Manner, upbraided him with

his Neglect of preserving the King's Life, since his Spear, and the Cruise of Water, that were so near his Bed's Head, were so easily taken from him: And when *Saul*, upon hearing his Voice, came out of the Camp, and spake to him, he expostulated with him, much in the same Manner as he did, after his Escape from the Cave, with this additional Complaint, that, by thus expelling him from his own Country, he forc'd him to converse with *Infidels*, and (as much as in him lay) to embrace their Religion. Whereupon *Saul*, accusing himself of Cruelty, and applauding *David's* Generosity, confess'd his Guilt, and promis'd, for the future, never to make any farther Attempts upon his Life.

BUT, notwithstanding these specious Declarations, *David*, who knew the Instability of *Saul's* Temper, and how impossible it was for him to live in Safety, while he continu'd in his Dominions, determin'd at last to go over to the *Philistines*; and, having

From 1 Sam. i. to the End.

His Retreating to Achish, and living at Ziklag.

† The Inconstancy, Falseness, and implacable Rage of this Prince is really inconceivable. Not long ago he was oblig'd to *David* for his Life, and acknowledg'd his Error, and made *David* swear, that he would be kind and merciful to his Posterity; and yet now he openly declares himself again his Enemy, and goes in Pursuit of him to kill him. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† This may seem a bold and strange Attempt, for two Persons to go into the Midst of an Army of three Thousand chosen Men; but, in Answer to this, many Things may be consider'd: As that, according to the Accounts of many credible Historians, several gallant Men have attempted Things of no less Danger and Difficulty than this was; that *David* had all along Assurance given him, that God would preserve him in all Dangers to succeed in the Kingdom; and that, at this Time, he might have a particular Impulse and Incitement from God to go upon this Enterprize, and might possibly be inform'd by him, that he had cast them into a deep Sleep, that he might give him this second Opportunity of manifesting to *Saul* his Innocence, and the Justness of his Cause. Not to say, that as Secrecy, at this Time, was the great Point, *David* might think himself safer, in this Respect, with one single Companion, than with more. *Pool's Annotations, and The Life of King David.*

* That it was customary for Warriors, when they laid them down to Rest, to have their Arms plac'd in Order by them, is evident, from what *Silius Italicus* tells us of *Mago*, *Hannibal's* Brother.

Nec degener ille
Belligeri Ritûs taurino membra jacebat
Effultus Tergo, & mulcebat tristia Somno.
Haud procul *Hasta* viri terrâ defixa propinquâ
Et dira è summâ pendebat cuspidè Cassis
Et Clypeus Loricaque, & ensis, & arcus,
Et Telum Balcare simul tellure quiescunt. Lib. vii.

But, long before *Silius*, *Homer* describes the *Thracians* sleeping in this Manner in their Tents:

Οἱ δ' εὖδον καμάτῳ ἀδδηνότας, ἔντεα δὲ σφιν
Καλὰ παρ' αὐτοῖσι χθονὶ κέκλιτο εὖ κατὰ νόσμον. Il. 10.
Ῥῆσος δ' ἐν μέθῳ εὖδε

† The Speech, which *David* makes to *Abner*, according to *Josephus*, is to this Effect: — “ Are not you a fit Man to be a Prince's Favourite, a General of his Army, to take upon you the Guard of his royal Person, and under all these honourable Obligations, to lie dozing, and stretching yourself at Ease, when your Master's Life is in Danger? Can you tell me what is become of the King's Lance, and the Pitcher of Water, that were this Night taken by the Enemy out of his Tent, and from his very Bed-Side, and you, in the mean Time, all snoring about him, without knowing any Thing of the Matter? Whether this was Neglect or Treachery, 'tis the same Thing: you certainly deserve to lose your Head for it.” *Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. c. 14.*

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having obtain'd from † *Achish*, King of *Gath*, a safe Conduct for himself and his Retinue, he, for some Time, liv'd in the royal City; but, not liking his Accommodation here so well, as he grew in Favour with the King ever more and more, he obtain'd of him at last to have the † Town of *Ziklag* assign'd for his Habitation, and, as soon as he was settled here, several of *Saul's* best Officers and Soldiers came over to him. *David* at first had some Suspicion of them; but having, for some Time, made Trial of their Fidelity, he receiv'd them into his Service, and gave them Commands: And, with this Accession to his Army, he was enabled to make several Excursions against the || *Amalekites*, and other Nations, in which he was accustom'd to kill all, that none might carry Information, and, at the same Time, † by certain ambiguous Expressions, made the King believe, that the Booty, he brought back with him, was

taken from the *Israelites*, which was no unpleasant News. From 1 Sam. i. to the End.

IN short, to such a Degree of Confidence was he grown with *Achish*, that he propos'd taking him along with him to the War, which the *Philistines* had at this Time declar'd against *Saul*; but some of the chief Men about him declaring against it, as being apprehensive, that, in the Day of Battle he might possibly turn against them, prevail'd with the King to dismiss him. This was an agreeable Turn to *David*; yet he so far dissembled the Matter, that the King (to oblige his Nobles) was forc'd to be very pressing, and importunate with him to return to *Ziklag*; which, accordingly he did, and, in his March thither, was join'd by several of the Tribe of *Manasseh* (as those of *Gad* and *Benjamin* had done before) to a considerable Augmentation of his Forces. And well it so happen'd: For, upon his Return to *Ziklag*, he found that the *Amalekites*

† Whether this was the same *Achish*, mention'd 1 Sam. xxi. 10. with whom *David* took Shelter, at his first Flight from *Saul*, or some Successor of the same Name, is a Matter of some Conjecture: His being call'd *Achish*, the Son of *Maach*, seems to imply, that he was a different Person; because, in the Nature of Things, these Words can have no Use, but only to distinguish this *Achish* from another of the same Name. But whoever it was, 'tis highly probable, that he either had invited *David* to come thither for his Security, or that *David* had sent before-hand Embassadors to treat with him, and to obtain his royal Promise of Protection. And this we are the rather induc'd to believe, because both found their Advantage by this Alliance: *David* secur'd himself against the Persecutions of *Saul*; and *Achish*, knowing *David's* Valour, and the Number of *Troops*, which came along with him, thought he should give a powerful Diversion to the Forces of *Israel*, if he could at this Time attach *David* to his Interest. But whether *David* did well or ill, in either suing for, or accepting of the Protection of this foreign King, is a Point that we shall have Occasion to discuss hereafter. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries, and *The Life of King David*.

† *Ziklag* was situate in the extreme Parts of the Tribe of *Judah* southwards, nor far from *Hormah*, where the *Israelites* receiv'd a Defeat, while they sojourn'd in the Wilderness. In the Division of the Land of *Canaan*, it was first given to the Tribe of *Judah*, Josh. xv. 31. and afterwards to that of *Simeon*, Josh. xix. 5. but the *Philistines* seem all along to have kept Possession, so that it never came into the Hands of either Tribe, until, by the Gift of *Achish*, it became the peculiar Inheritance of *David* and his Successors. Why *David* desir'd of *Achish* the Liberty to retire to this Place, was to avoid the Envy, which the Number of his Attendants might possibly occasion; to secure his People from the Infection of *Idolatry*; to enjoy the free Exercise of his own Religion; and to gain an Opportunity of enterprising something against the Enemies of God, without the Knowledge or Observation of the *Philistines*. *Calmet's* Commentary, and *Pool's* Annotations.

|| In 1 Sam. xv. 7. we read, that *Saul smote the Amalekites, and utterly destroyed all the People with the Edge of the Sword*; and yet we find here *David* making frequent Incursions upon the *Amalekites*; and therefore the Meaning of the former Passage must be, that *Saul* destroy'd as many of them as fell into his Hands; for several of them might make their Escape from *Saul* into the Deserts that lay towards *Arabia-Felix*, and upon his Retreat, return and repossess their old Habitation. *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

† The Words, wherein *David* answer'd this Question of *Achish*, *Whither have you made a Road to Day?* are these, *Against the South of Judah, and against the South of the Jerahmeelites, and against the South of the Kenites*, 1 Sam. xxvii. 10. By which Nations *David*, in Reality, meant the *Geshurites*, and the *Gazrites*, who were both of them Relicks of the *Canaanites*, whom God order'd to be extirpated, and who did, in Truth, live to the South of *Judah*; but *Achish* understood him in a quite contrary Sense, viz. that he had fallen upon his own Countrymen. So that, since the Formality of a Lye consists in our imposing upon those, with whom we converse, we cannot but allow, that tho' *David's* Answer may not be call'd a downright Lye, yet it is an *Equivocation*, with an Intent to deceive, badly comporting with that Honesty, and Simplicity, which became *David*, both as a Prince, and Professor of the true Religion, wherein he is no way to be excus'd, and much less to be imitated. *Pool's* Annotations.

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kites had burnt, and pillag'd the Place, † and carry'd away his two Wives, and all the People that were therein; and (what was no small Accession to this Misfortune) his Soldiers mutiny'd against him, as if he had been † the Occasion of it. *David*, however, marching away immediately, and having gain'd Intelligence which Way the Enemy took, soon came up with them; fell upon them, and cut them to Pieces, and not only recover'd all the Persons, and the Booty, which they had taken, but several *rich Spoils* likewise, that they had robb'd others of in this Expedition, whereof he made *Presents* to his Friends †.

Saul's consulting the Witch of Endor.

IN the mean Time, the *Philistine* Army lay at † *Shunem*, and *Saul* and his Forces were encamp'd in Mount *Gilboa*, from whence having a Prospect of the Enemy's

Strength, † his Courage fail'd him, when he saw how much more numerous the *Philistines* were, and found, at the same Time, that God, in this pressing Juncture, would not be consulted by him, nor give him any Instructions what to do. He had, some Time before, banish'd all the *Wizards*, and such as dealt with *familiar Spirits*, out of the Nation; but, being now in the utmost Perplexity, † he was resolv'd to consult some one of this Profession, in order to know what the Fate of this War would be. At *Endor*, about three Leagues from Mount *Gilboa*, he was told there liv'd a * *Witch*, or *Sorceress*; and therefore, disguising himself, and taking but two Servants with him, that he might not be suspected, he came to the Woman * by Night, and desir'd of her * to raise up the Ghost of *Samuel*.

From 1 Sam. i. to the End.

W H E T H E R

† It may seem a little strange, that the *Amalekites*, who had so often been cut to Pieces by *David*, should not, upon their Success, slay, rather than carry away, the People, which they found in *Ziklag*: But this may be imputed either to their Covetousness, who might keep them for Sale, and to make Money of them as Captives; or to their Cruelty, who might reserve them for more lingering and repeated Torments; or perhaps for the Gratification of their brutal Lusts; though principally it is to be ascrib'd to God's over-ruling Providence, who restrain'd, and set Bounds to their Rage. *Pool's* Annotations.

† This he might seem to be in relinquishing his own Country, and coming to *Ziklag*; in provoking the *Amalekites*, by the Slaughter of all that came in his Way; and in going with *Achish* to War, while he left the Place, where their Wives and Children were, unguarded. *Pool's* Annotations.

† His Friends were chiefly those of his own Tribe; but, besides these, we find he sent to others, viz. to the Inhabitants of the City of *Bethel*, which belong'd to the Tribe of *Ephraim*; and this he did, not only in Acknowledgment of the Shelter and Support, which he had receiv'd from them in his Banishment, but in Prospect of their future Favour and Interest, in Case there should happen a Vacancy in the Throne. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

† *Shunem* was a City in the Borders of the Tribe of *Issachar*, about five Miles to the South of Mount *Hermon*, according to *St Jerom* and *Eusebius*; who tells us likewise, that *Gilboa* was a Ridge of Mountains, six Miles Distance from *Scythopolis*, antiently called *Bethshan*; and that *Endor* was a Town in the Valley of *Jezreel*, at the Foot of Mount *Gilboa*. *Well's* Geography of the Old Testament, and *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

† The *Philistines* must have had, on this Occasion, several *hir'd* Forces, otherwise *Saul* had no Reason to have been afraid of them, because the small Tract, which the *Philistines* inhabited, could not possibly supply them with an Army any Thing equal to the *Hebrews*, who, in some of their Wars, have carry'd to the Field some hundred Thousands of Men. *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

† A strange Infatuation this of *Saul*! He had banish'd all *Wizards* and *Sorcerers* out of his Kingdom, as a dangerous Sort of People, who made Profession of a wicked and unwarrantable Art; and yet he here enquires after one, and puts his whole Confidence in what he had so wisely exploded before; as if a *Witch*, with her Incantations, and other diabolical Arts, was capable of allaying the Uneasiness of his Mind, or securing him from the Apprehensions of Danger. It may be observ'd however, that he mentions a *Woman*, rather than a *Man* to be consulted upon this Occasion, because he might imagine, that the weaker Sex might more easily be deceiv'd by evil Spirits, and were generally more addicted to these unlawful Practices. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

* The *Septuagint* have called her, a *Woman that speaks from her Belly, or Stomach*, as most Magicians affect to do; and some modern Authors have inform'd us, that there were Women, who had a *Demon*, which spake articulately from the lower Part of their Stomachs, in a very loud, though hoarse Tone:

Umbra cum sagana resonant trille & acutum.

HOR. Sat. viii.

* They could not go the direct Way; for then they must have pass'd through the Enemies Camp; and therefore they took a Compass, and travelled by Night, that they might not be discover'd; besides that, the Night was the properest Time to consult those, that pretended to magical Incantations, it being a common Opinion among the *Greeks*, as perhaps now it might be among the *Hebrews*, that none of the terrestrial *Demons* did appear in the Day-Time. *Patrick's* Commentary.

* It was a common Pretence of *Magicians*, that they could raise up Ghosts from below, or make dead Persons appear, to declare unto them future Events.

————— Crorer

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.

WHETHER it was the Ghost of *Samuel*, which God, upon this Occasion, permitted to appear, or some evil Spirit, whom the Witch, by her *Enchantments*, might raise up; but so it was, that, from this *Spectre* † the Woman learnt, that it was *Saul*, who had employ'd her; and *Saul*, when he saw it, bow'd his Face to the Ground. The *Apparition* spake first, and, demanding the Reason, * why he had rais'd him from the Dead, was answer'd by *Saul*, that the *Philistines*, with a powerful Army, had invaded him, and, in his Distress, God had forsaken him, and would give no Answer, † which Way soever he consulted him: To whom the Spirit reply'd, that, for his Disobedi-

ence, in not destroying the *Amalekites*, God had taken away the Kingdom from his Family, and given it to *David*; and, as to the Fate of the War, the *Philistines*, † the next Day, should rout his Army, and he and his Sons fall in the Battle.

SAUL had no sooner heard his Doom, but he fainted away; and, as he had eaten nothing for some considerable Time, * the Woman and his Servants with much ado prevail'd with him to take some Refreshment: Which when he had done, he went away, and march'd all Night, that he might come early enough to the Camp next Morning.

THE next Morning the two Armies met, and engag'd, but the *Israelites* were forc'd *Is vanquish'd by the Philistines and slain.*

Cruror in fossam effusus, ut inde

Manes elicerant, animas responsa daturas.

HOR. Sat. lib. i.

And therefore *Saul* addresses the Woman, as if he believ'd her Abilities in that Way. This however shews, not only the Antiquity of *Necromancy*, but the prevailing Opinion then, that the Soul, after the Death of the Body, did survive: otherwise it would have been impertinent for *Saul* to desire the Woman to raise up *Samuel*: Which makes it the greater Wonder, that we have no where, in the *Old Testament*, a positive Declaration of the Soul's Immortality. *Calmet's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

† How the Woman came to know it to be *Samuel*, we may thus imagine. She saw an Apparition she did not expect; she knew the Prophet; she knew the Veneration, which *Saul* had for him; she knew that Prophets were only sent to Kings; and she knew withal, that her Art, whatever it was, had never before that Time exhibited a Person of that Figure to her; and from hence she concluded, that the Apparition must needs be *Samuel*, and the Person, who came to consult her, in all Probability, was *Saul*. *The History of the Life of King David*.

* The Words of *Samuel* are, *Why hast thou disquieted me, and brought me up?* Which seem to imply, that *Samuel* was rais'd up by the Force of this Woman's Inchantments: But, as it is not in the Power of Witches to disturb the Rest of good Men, and bring them into the World when they please, it is much more rational to think, that the Scripture here expresses itself in a Manner suitable to the Prejudice of the Vulgar, among whom it was a common Notion, that these Incantations gave Trouble to the Souls that were at Rest: For which Reason, they were either to be appeas'd by Offerings, or constrain'd by the Force of Inchantments; for so the Tragedian has inform'd us,

Carmenque magicum volvit, & rapido minax

Decantat ore, quicquid aut placat leves

Aut cogit Umbras.

SENECA in OEdip.

† The sacred Historian has reckon'd up three several Ways of enquiring of God, viz. by *Dreams*, by *Urim*, and by *Prophets*; and it may not be amiss to observe, that there were the same Methods of consulting their Gods among the *Gentiles*; as it appears by what *Achilles* says in the Council of the *Greeks*, when met together to consider about the Plague which *Apollo* sent among them:

Ἄλλ' ἄγε δὴ τινα μάντιν ἐρεώμεν, ἢ ἱερῆα,

ἢ καὶ ὀνειροπόλον, καὶ γὰρ τ' ὄναρ ἐκ Διὸς ἐστίν.

† The Phrase wherein *Samuel* expresses himself, is this, ——— *To-morrow shalt thou and thy Sons be with me*: Where the Word *To-morrow* (as some Interpreters imagine) is not to be taken in a strict Sense, because (as they conceive) this Battle was not fought till some Time after; but, in the Passage before us, there seems to be no Reason, why *To-morrow* should not be taken literally: For, as *Endor* was at no great Distance from the *Israelites* Camp, *Saul* might go that Night, consult the Witch, slay, and eat with her, and get back to the Camp before it was light. The next Day the Battle begins; *Saul* is vanquish'd; and, seeing his Army routed, despairs, and stabs himself. All this might very well be done in the Space of twelve or fourteen Hours; and therefore I see no Occasion why we should depart from the plain Signification of the Words. *Calmet's* Commentary.

* *Josephus* seems to be very warm in his Commendation of this Woman's Generosity to *Saul*. "She receiv'd him, treated him, and reliev'd him; and all this so chearfully, and so frankly, that she gave him all she had, without any Prospect of Reward; for she knew, that he was doom'd to die: And, what is more, this she did for the very Man, whose Prohibition had been her Ruin." But he rashly supposes, that, in the Words of the sacred History, the Narration is accurate, and defective in no one Circumstance; whereas, for any Thing we know, this Woman was far from being poor; *Saul* had amply rewarded her for raising up *Samuel*, and his Attendants might give her a round Price for her Lamb. And though it must be own'd, that her Address to the King is tender, and respectful enough; yet, whether it proceeded from Fear or Affection, may admit of some Debate. *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

A. M. 2888, &c.
Ant. Christ. 1116, &c.

forc'd to give Way, and maintain'd a running Fight, until he came to Mount *Gilboa*; where, gaining the Advantage of the Ground, they attempted to rally again, but with as little Success as before. *Saul* and his Sons did all that was possible for brave Men to do; but the *Philistines* aiming wholly at them, in a short Time, overpower'd them with Numbers, † so that *Jonathan*, and two others of his Brothers, *Abinadab*, and *Malchishua*, were kill'd upon the Spot, and the whole Army put in Confusion.

SAUL defended himself as well as Man could do; but the small Party that remain'd with him being entirely broken, and the † Enemies Archers pressing hard upon him, he found himself so weaken'd with his Wounds, and Loss of Blood, that, for fear of falling into their Hands and being insulted, he fell upon his own Sword, and so died. He had requested of his *Armour-Bearer* before this to dispatch him; but his *Armour-Bearer* was startled

at the Proposal, and refus'd to do it: From 1 Sam. i. to the End.
However, when he saw his Master dead, † he desperately follow'd his Example, and, in the same Manner, put an End to his Life.

THE next Day, when the *Philistines* came to take a View of the Field of Battle, finding the Bodies of *Saul* and his Sons among the Slain, they stripp'd them of their Armour, cut off their Heads, and sent *Expreses* to every Place of their Victory. * Their Armour they sent to the Temple of *Ashtaroth*, their Heads they fix'd up in the Temple of *Dagon*, and their Bodies they hung upon Gibbets against the Walls of *Bethshan*. But the Inhabitants of *Jabesh-gilead*, hearing of this Indignity, and retaining a grateful Sense of the Services *Saul* had done them, sent a Party of their best Soldiers by Night, who took down their Bodies, and brought them away to *Jabesh*, where the People first † burnt the Remains of their Flesh; next, honourably interr'd their Bones and Ashes,

† It was certainly no small Grief to *David* to hear of *Jonathan's* Death, and a Trial it might be of his Patience, and Resignation to the Divine Will; but still there seems to be a Direction of Providence in suffering him to be slain, that *David* might more easily come to the Throne. For, though *Jonathan*, no doubt, would have made a voluntary Dedition of it, yet, as he was the People's great Favourite, some there might possibly be, who would not allow of the Dedition, and so a civil War might have arose concerning the Successor, which, by his dying in this Manner, was prevented. *Pool's* Annotations.

† There is no mention of Archers in any of the *Philistine* Armies, or Battles, before this; in which they are said to have press'd hard upon *Saul*, as doubtless they were of great Advantage to the *Philistines* in making their Attack, 1st, Because an Assault with this Kind of Weapon was new, and surprising, and therefore generally successful; and 2dly, Because the Arrows destroying the *Israelites* at a Distance, before they came to close Fight, threw them naturally into Terror and Confusion. And for this Reason some think, that, when *David* came to the Throne, he taught the *Israelites* the Use of the Bow, (as we read 2 Sam. i. 18.) that they might not be inferior to the *Philistines*, nor fall into the like Disaster, that *Saul* had done; and for this Reason it certainly was, that, when he had made a Peace with the *Philistines*, he took some of their Archers (who, in the following Books, are frequently mention'd under the Name of *Cerethites*) to be his Body-Guard. *Patrick's* Commentary, and *The History of the Life of King David*.

† The learned and ingenious Author of *The Historical Account of the Life of King David*, seems to make it evident, that *Saul* and his *Armour-Bearer*, died by the same Sword, viz. that which belong'd to the *Armour-Bearer*. "Now it is an establish'd Tradition of the *Jewish* Church, says he, that this *Armourer-Bearer* was *Doeg* the *Edomite*, who, by *Saul's* Command, slew such a Number of Priests in one Day, 1 Sam. xxii. 19. and if so, then *Saul* and his Executioner fell both by the same Weapon wherewith they had before massacred the Servants of the Lord: Even as *Brutus* and *Cassius* kill'd themselves with the same Sword with which they treacherously murder'd *Caesar*; I say treacherously murder'd, because they lay in his Bosom at the same Time that they meditated his Death." Vol. 1.

* We have taken Notice before, that it was an ancient Custom among sundry Nations to hang up the Arms, and other Spoils taken from the Enemy, in the Temple of their Gods, as Trophies and Monuments of their Victory; and need only remark here, that the same Custom prevail'd among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, as appears from this Passage of *Virgil*.

Multaque præterea sacris in Postibus Arma,
Captivi pendent Currus, curvæque secures,
Et cristæ Caput, & Portarum ingentia claustra,
Spiculaque, Clypeique, cretaque rostra carinis.

Æneid. vii.

† It is certain that the Usage among the *Hebrews* was not to burn, but embalm the Bodies of their Dead with aromatick Spices; but in this Case the People of *Jabesh* might act otherwise, either because the Bodies of *Saul* and his Sons were, by this Time, so dry'd, or corrupted, that they were not fit to be embalm'd; or because they were apprehensive,

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.

Ashes, in a Grove that was near their City ;
and then, for the Space of † seven Days,

fasted, and made great Lamentation for
them.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

The OBJECTION.

“ **T**H O’ the first Book of *Samuel*
“ (whichever its Author was) con-
“ tains a great Variety of History, and
“ is pregnant with many remarkable
“ Transactions ; yet whoever takes an
“ accurate Survey of them, will find them
“ so loaded with Absurdities and Contra-
“ dictions, as utterly destroy their Cre-
“ dibility. For, whatever Motives the
“ *Israelites* might have for carrying the
“ Ark along with them to the War, if
“ the real Presence of God went along
“ with it, we can hardly conceive how
“ the *Philistines* could possibly take it
“ captive ; and if there was no divine
“ Power attending it, how it came to
“ work those Wonders, wherever it abode,
“ and to inflict upon its Enemies such sore
“ Punishments for their Detention of it.

“ Its Enemies indeed, (upon this
“ Supposition) had Cause enough to endea-
“ vour to get rid of it ; but it is a Matter
“ of some Admiration, why the *Israe-*
“ *lites*, when they had it return’d to
“ them, did not carry it directly to *Shiloh*,
“ and there reposit it in the Tabernacle,
“ its proper Habitation. It looks indeed,
“ as if they were afraid of it, and willing
“ to shift it from one to another, after it
“ had made such Havock among the poor
“ People of *Bethshemesh*, as to destroy
“ above *fifty Thousand of them*, an incre-
“ dible Number ! merely for presuming

“ to peep into it, tho’ they had receiv’d it
“ with the greatest Respect and Congra-
“ tulations but just before.

“ **T**H E *Israelites*, it must be own’d,
“ were, upon several Accounts, a very
“ rebellious People, but it is difficult to
“ conceive, where their great Iniquity
“ lay, in desiring a King, as other Nations
“ had ; especially, since *Samuel’s* Sons
“ rul’d so badly, and God, in his great
“ Wisdom, had pre-ordain’d that, when
“ they came into the promis’d Land,
“ their Government should be *regal*.
“ This King, we understand, was to be
“ elected by God ; but it looks a little en-
“ vious, and as if he had *given them a King*
“ *in his Wrath*, to make Choice of one
“ out of the *meanest* of all the Tribes,
“ and for no other good Qualification,
“ that we read of, but merely the *Tall-*
“ *ness* of his Stature. The State and Dig-
“ nity however, to which he was ad-
“ vanc’d, was not so great, since, after
“ his Election, we find him (a) acting
“ in the Capacity of a *Shepherd* ; nor was
“ his Enjoyment of the Throne attended
“ with much Felicity, since God turn’d
“ his Enemy so soon, and rejected him,
“ for not destroying the whole Race of
“ the *Amalekites*.

“ (b) **G** O D’S Command indeed, to
“ have every Thing belonging to *Amalek*,
“ Men and Women, Infants and Suck-
“ lings,

apprehensive, that if they should embalm them, and so bury them, the People of *Bethshan* might, at one Time or other, come and dig them up, and fix them against their Walls again ; and therefore the *Jabeshites* thought it advisable to recede from their common Practice, and, for the greater Security, to imitate the *Heathens* in this Particular.

Κλαίοντες δ’ ἐτάφισαν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅλῃα λευκά

ἄλλεγον ἐς χρυσέην φιάλην.

H o m. II. xxiii.

Calmer’s and *Le Clerc’s* Commentaries.

† It seems a little strange, that we no where read of any general Mourning that was made for *Saul* and his Sons, who died in Battle ; but the *national* Troubles which follow’d upon his Death, might perhaps be an Obstruction to this. *David* and his Men mourn’d but *one Day* for *Saul* ; And therefore, when it is said of the *Jabeshites*, that they fasted *seven Days*, their Fasting must not be understood in a strict Sense, as if they eat nothing all this Time, but in a more large and general Signification, as it is us’d both in *sacred* and *prophane* Writers, *viz.* that they liv’d very abstemiously, eat little, and that seldom, and that but mean Food, and, instead of Wine, drank Water only. *Calmer’s* Commentary, and *Pool’s* Annotations.

(a) 1 Sam. xi. 5.

(b) Christianity as old as the Creation, p. 273.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.

“ lings, Oxen and Sheep, Camels and
“ Affes, utterly destroy’d, for an Offence
“ done four hundred Years before, and to
“ prosecute Revenge upon a People,
“ whose only Crime was, their being the
“ unhappy Descendants of those, who
“ had originally done it; seems to bear as
“ hard upon the Justice and Goodness of
“ God, as his sending *Samuel* to *Bethlehem*
“ to anoint *David* King, and bidding
“ him, at the same Time, pretend that
“ he came only to offer a Sacrifice, re-
“ flects upon his Truth and Veracity.

“ IT may very well be question’d how-
“ ever, by what Authority *Samuel* could
“ offer any Sacrifice (since he was not of
“ the sacerdotal Order) on such Altars as
“ were prohibited, and in such Places as
“ were not appointed for these Offices,
“ to the manifest Violation of God’s
“ Laws: And much more may it be
“ wonder’d at, that a Man of his pacifick
“ Character should fall upon a poor cap-
“ tive King, and cut him in Pieces with
“ his own Hands, even in the Presence of
“ his own Sovereign, who, out of his
“ Clemency, had thought proper to save
“ him; and so setting himself above the
“ Jurisdiction of God’s Anointed, and
“ flying in the Face of his Authority.

“ WHAT *Saul*’s particular Distemper
“ was, ’tis no easy Matter to determine;
“ but since the Scripture expresses it by
“ (c) *an evil Spirit from the Lord*, ’tis
“ difficult to conceive, how *David*, by
“ playing upon his Harp, (even (d) tho’
“ he might sing to it likewise) could ever
“ be able to dispossess him. The Power
“ of Musick is confessedly great; and yet
“ we find it had little or no Effect upon
“ *Saul*, since he still continu’d craz’d and
“ delirious. For to what other Cause can
“ we impute his (e) strange Forgetfulness
“ of *David*, who had been so frequently
“ in his Presence, and (f) found such
“ favour in his Sight; (g) whose Atten-
“ dance he had requested of his Father,

“ and whose Service in curing his Malady,
“ he had requited with the honourable
“ Post of his *Armour-Bearer*; with
“ whom (h) he had a Conference but just
“ before, and seen him both put on and
“ off his Armour, and after all this, could
“ any but a Mad-Man, enquire of his
“ General (who knew it seems as little as
“ his Master) (i) whose Son this Stripling
“ was?

“ WHETHER *David* himself was
“ really delirious, or only pretended to
“ be so, when he came to the Court of
“ *Achish*, is a Question, that admits of
“ some Debate; but it seems as if he were
“ not much better, when he made not
“ only *Gath*, which was the Capital of
“ the *Philistines*, and the City where
“ *Goliath* had dwelt, the Place of his
“ Refuge, but (as if he meant on Purpose
“ to provoke the Inhabitants thereof) took
“ the Sword of the *Champion* along with
“ him, whom he had so lately slain. Well
“ was it for him, if, to secure him from
“ Harm, God depriv’d him of his Senses
“ at this Juncture. For to extricate him-
“ self from a *Premunire* he had voluntarily
“ run into, by personating the *Mad-Man*,
“ or pretending to be a Fool, was but a
“ mean Trick; as his opening an *Asylum*
“ afterwards, not for his own Relations
“ only, but for every one, that was in
“ Debt, or Distress, or Discontent with
“ the Government, was certainly an unjust
“ Artifice.

“ SAUL certainly was his avow’d
“ Enemy, and pursu’d him with impla-
“ cable Malice; and therefore it would
“ have been much more excusable in
“ him, if he had cas’d himself of this
“ Adversary, when Providence threw Op-
“ portunities in his Way, than to meditate
“ the Murder of *Nabal*, and his Family,
“ (k) merely because he would not pay
“ Contributions to him, and his Gang of
“ *Deesperadoes*: And, tho’ Reservedness to
“ an Enemy may be very commendable,
“ yet

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

(c) 1 Sam. xvi. 14.
xvi. 22.
xxii. 2.

(d) *Josephus*’s Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. cap. 9.
(g) Ibid. xvi. 21.

(h) Ibid. xvii. 38, 39.

(e) 1 Sam. xvii. 55.
(i) Ibid. Ver. 56.

(f) Ibid.
(k) Ibid.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.

“ yet his deep Diffimulation to *Achish*,
“ when there was no Occasion for it; his
“ entering into League with the Enemy
“ of his Country, joining his Forces, and
“ going to War with him; promising him
“ great Services, if once they came to
“ Action, and when he was desir’d to
“ withdraw, parting with the utmost Re-
“ luctance, are Instances of such a base
“ and perfidious Spirit, as a brave Man
“ should rather chuse to die, than be guilty
“ of.

“ (l) IN a Word, however *David* may
“ be called in Scripture *the Man after*
“ *God’s own Heart*, yet in these, and
“ several other Instances, he is found
“ sadly *prevaricating*, and much inferior
“ to the Character of *Saul*, who scorn’d
“ to make use of any mean Arts, even
“ for the Preservation of his Life; who,
“ instead of betaking himself to the Ene-
“ mies of God for Shelter, (as *David* did)
“ chose voluntarily to die, rather than to
“ fall into their Hands; and (m) tho’ he
“ knew assuredly that he was to fall in the
“ Battle, yet persisted in his Resolution to
“ stand by his Fate, rather than betray
“ his Army, or expose his royal Dignity
“ to Scorn.”

Answer’d, by
showing why
the Israelites
sent for the
Ark.

IN the fourth Chapter of this Book of *Samuel* we read, that, upon a Defeat, which the *Israelites* had receiv’d from the *Philistines*, the Elders of *Israel* advis’d together in Council what might be the Occasion of their ill Success; *Wherefore*, say they, *hath God smitten us to-day before the Philistines?* The Justness of their Cause, they thought, was enough to entitle them to God’s Favour, how wicked soever they were in their Lives; and therefore, without any Thoughts of amending these, they devis’d another Expedient that would not fail of securing them Victory: (n) *Let us fetch the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord*, say they, *out of Shiloh, that, when it comes among us, it may serve us out of the Hand of our Enemies.* (o) They had good Reason to

look upon the Ark of the Covenant as a certain Token of the Presence of God among them, and of his Protection over them. They had had frequent Experience of Battles won by Virtue of his Presence, and lost in the Absence of it; and whenever they had this Token of the divine Assistance along with them, they always esteem’d themselves invincible. They remember’d the Story of the Walls of *Jericho* (p) falling down by the Power of this Ark’s seven Times surrounding them. They had heard (q) of the Defeat which their Forefathers had suffer’d, when they presum’d to march against the *Canaanites* without their Leader, and without this Ark; and were fond enough to imagine, that God himself might be look’d upon as overcome, if the *Philistines* should have the Advantage, when the Ark of his Presence was with them. By this Means therefore they thought to interest his Honour in the War, and make him responsible (as it were) for any Disaster that should befall them; and upon these Motives it was that they sent for the Ark.

BUT, because they presum’d to send for it, without ever consulting God, as they us’d to do upon all momentous Affairs; because the Iniquities of the People were become so enormous, as not to deserve any longer the divine Presence among them; and because the Flagitiousness of the Priests (who were kill’d in defending the Ark) had for a long Time call’d for some Judgment upon them; that therefore his Predictions, concerning the Sons of *Eli*, might be fulfill’d, he permitted the Ark to be taken, as thinking it more inconsistent with his Honour to afford Assistance to the Wicked and Presumptuous, than to admit of the Prophanation even of the most sacred Things. What an Affliction the Loss of this Ark was to the People of *Israel* we may learn from the sad Fate of *Eli*, and his Daughter-in-Law, who both died for Grief at the bare

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

And why God
suffer’d it to be
taken by the
Philistines.

(l) Christianity as old as the Creation, p. 244.
iv. 3.

(o) Calmer’s Commentary.

(m) Josephus’s Jewish History, lib. vi. cap. 14.

(p) Josh. vi. 4.

(q) Numb. xiv. 44, 45.

(n) 1 Sam.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.

Hearing of it: And therefore we may suppose, that a farther Reason for God's permitting it, might be, to bring his own People to a Sense of their Apostacy and Ingratitude to him, when they came to consider, what a Damage they suffer'd in the *Departure* of this Symbol of his Presence, which was deservedly esteem'd (r) *the Glory of Israel*.

WHAT Afflictions the taking or withholding the Ark brought upon the *Philistines*, the Fall of their God *Dagon*, the Mice, the Emerods, the Pestilence, and other fore Judgments do abundantly testify; and therefore we may suppose yet farther, that God's Design, in permitting this *Capture* of the Ark, was to demonstrate his Power among the *Heathens*, and to let the *Philistines* know, that his Dominion reach'd every where; that he was equally the Lord both of the Conquerers and Conquered; and that the pretended Deities, whom they ador'd, in Comparison of him, were of no Avail.

'T WAS from an Intent therefore to illustrate his Almighty Power, and not from any Inability to preserve it, that God suffer'd this Ark of the Covenant to be taken; and tho' what the *Jews* call the *Schechinah*, or visible Token of God's Presence, which abode under the two Cherubims upon the *Propitiatory*, or Covering of the Ark, in the Shape of the Cloud, might not be so apparent, after it fell into the Hands of the *Philistines*; yet that it had divine and miraculous Power attending it, is evident by their own Confession, who, upon seeing the Destruction, that its Presence had occasion'd, do frankly declare, that (s) *the Ark of the God of Israel should not abide with them, because his Hand was sore upon them, and upon Dagon their God*.

Why God slew
the Bethshe-
mites.

It was a particular Prohibition, (t) that not only the common People, but even the *Levites* themselves should not dare to look into the Ark, or any other of the holy Utenfils belonging to the Ser-

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vice of God, upon Pain of Death; and the Severity of this Law will not seem so unreasonable, when it is consider'd, that, in every Nation it was always accounted a great Prophaneness, and frequently attended with exemplary Punishments, for such as were not initiated, (u) to obtrude into the Mysteries of Religion; and that, if the *Philistines*, for their Irreverence to the Ark, were treated with less Rigour than the *Bethshemites*, it was because the former were not instructed in the Laws of God, nor oblig'd to observe them.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

It must be acknowledg'd indeed, that there is a Mistake in our Translation, as well as in several others. *Bethshemeth* is a Place of no great Note in sacred History, and (x) by *Josephus* it is called no more than a Village; and therefore it is hardly conceivable, how it could contain such a Number, as *fifty Thousand and threescore and ten* Inhabitants, or why God, who is Goodness itself, should make such a Slaughter among those, who receiv'd his Ark with so much Joy, and testify'd their Gladness by their Oblation of Sacrifices. To solve this Difficulty therefore, some have observ'd, that the Words in the Original, and, according to their natural Construction, stand thus: — He smote of the People *threescore and ten Men, fifty Thousand Men*; where there is plainly wanting some Particle or other, to make the Sense compleat. They observe further, that, if this is to be taken for a total Sum, the Order of the Words is plainly inverted, and that the *Thousands* should go before the *inferior* Numbers, as is usual in all Languages; and therefore, since there is a manifest Defect in the Copy, they think it not amiss to supply it with the Particle *Men, out of*, which, in many other Instances, is known to be omitted, and here makes the Sense compleat; viz. that, of the People of *Bethshemeth*, for their Irreverence to the Ark, he smote *seventy Men out of fifty Thousand*. For, tho' fifty

And to what
Number.

8 U

Thousand

(r) 1 Sam. iv. 22.
Lib. ii. Cap. 12. Pag. 200.

(s) Ibid. v. 7.

(x) *Jewish Antiq.* Lib. vi. Cap. 2.

(t) Numb. iv. 20.

(u) Vide *Hurtii Quest. Alect.*

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1116, &c.

Thousand Men can hardly be suppos'd in so small a Place; yet, upon hearing of the Arrival of the Ark, the Country might flock in from other Parts, and, in a few Days, make up that Number; and tho', possibly, most of them might be guilty of the same profane Rudeness, yet God, in his great Clemency, might punish no more than *seventy of them*, and that, on purpose to deter others from the like Irreverence. For it is not unlikely, that these People might hold the Ark in more Contempt, since the Time that it had been conquer'd, (as it were) and led captive by their Enemies; and, for this Reason, God might the rather exert his *vindictive* Arm, on purpose to teach them, that this *Symbol* of his Presence had lost none of its miraculous Power, by the ill Usage it had met with in its Absence.

Why the Ark
was not carry'd
to Shiloh.

UPON the Removal of the Ark from *Bethshemesh*, (y) it is not unlikely that there was a general Assembly of the Elders of *Israel*, and that, to prevent the like Offence, the Ceremony was perform'd with the greatest Order and Solemnity; but why it was not carry'd to *Shiloh*, and repositd in the Tabernacle, the most probable Opinion is, that, after the Death of *Eli*, the *Philistines* had destroy'd the Place, and the Tabernacle was remov'd from thence to *Nob*, where it continu'd until the Death of *Samuel*. As *Kirjath-jearim* therefore stood at no great Distance, was a Place of considerable Strength, and had a remarkable Eminence in it,

proper for the Reception of the Ark, whether it was order'd to be remov'd for the present, with a Design, no doubt, to have it restor'd to its antient Seat, at a convenient Season: But, through the Neglect of Religion, as well as the Disturbance of the Times, its Removal was deferr'd from Day to Day, so that, tho' *David* first brought it to the House of *Obed-Edom*, and then to his Palace at *Sion*, yet we nowhere read † of its being replac'd in the Tabernacle any more.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

WHEN *Samuel* was highly displeas'd with the Elders of *Israel* for desiring a King, and thereupon apply'd himself for Advice, the Answer which God return'd him was this: (z) *Hearken unto the Voice of the People in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.* These are, no doubt, the Words of an angry Sovereign, resenting the Slight put upon his Government, and the Indignity done to his Person; and therefore, to give a full Answer to the Objection, we shall first consider the Nature of the Government they were under, and of that which they desir'd; and from thence deduce the several Aggravations of their Guilt, in being so importunate for a Change.

The Israelites
Offence in de-
siring a King.

JOSEPHUS, (a) in his Book against *Apion*, has these remarkable Words; "Several Nations have their several Forms of Government, and their Diversities of Customs. Some Governments are com-

The Nature of
Theocracy.

mitted.

(y) *Calmet's* Commentary.

† The future History of this sacred Ark is this: — After the Building of the Temple at *Jerusalem*, *Solomon* had it remov'd from *Sion*, into a proper Place that was consecrated for it, where it remain'd with all suitable Respect, till the Times of the latter Kings of *Judah*, who gave themselves up to Idolatry, and were not afraid to put the Images of their Gods in the *Holy Place* itself. Hereupon the Priests, being unable to endure this Profanation, took the Ark, and carry'd it from Place to Place, that, by this Means, it might escape the Fury of these impious Princes: But *Josiah*, who was a good Man, and restor'd the true Worship of God, commanded them to bring it back to the Sanctuary, and forbade them to carry it into the Country, as they had done. The *Talmudists* however have a Tradition, that *Solomon*, having learn'd by Revelation, that the *Affyrians* would one Day burn the Temple, which he had lately built, and carry away all the rich Materials, which he had plac'd there, took care to have a private Hole made under Ground, where, in Case of Necessity, he might conceal the most valuable Things belonging to it from the Knowledge of any Enemies; and that *Josiah*, having a Foresight of the Calamities, which were coming upon the *Jewish* Nation, here hid the Ark of the Covenant, together with *Aaron's* Rod, the Pot of *Manna*, the High-Priest's *Pectoral*, and the *holy Oil*; but that, during the *Babylonish* Captivity, the Priests having lost all Knowledge of the Place, where these Things were concealed, they were never seen more, and were not in the second Temple. *Calmet's* Dictionary, under the Word *Ark*.

(z) 1 Sam. viii. 7.

(a) Lib. ii.

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“mitted to a single Person, others to a certain Number of select Men, and others again to all the People in general; but our Lawgiver, *says he*, has declar’d, that ours shall † be a *Theocracy*, and has ascrib’d all Rule, and sovereign Power, to God alone.” For, tho’ it was necessary, for the due Execution of his Commands, that there should be some visible Minister between him and his People, such as *Moses* and *Joshua* were in the Time of their Administration; yet it is certain, that they never ordain’d any thing of Moment without a special Command from him. The same Direction which was given *Joshua*, that (b) *he should stand before Eleazar the Priest, who should ask Counsel for him, after the Judgment of Urim before the Lord*, was requir’d of all other Persons, that presid’d in publick Affairs. (c) In all Cases of weighty Concern, they were to have Recourse to him, who always reserv’d to himself the sole Power of establishing Laws, and appointing Magistrates, and making War. Nay, so very desirous was God to shew himself to be King of the *Hebrews*, that there was no Ensign of Royalty belonging to earthly Princes, that, by his own Appointment, was not provided for him, on purpose to engage the People’s Attention, (as the Commentator on *Maimonides* speaks) and to make them perceive, that their King, who was the *Lord of Hosts*, was in the midst of them.

WHAT Design God Almighty had in

constituting himself the King of this People, is evident from the Instructions which he gives *Moses*. (d) *Thus shalt thou say to the House of Jacob, and tell the Children of Israel; ye have seen what I have done unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on Eagles Wings, and brought you unto myself: Now therefore, if ye will obey my Voice indeed, and keep my Covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar Treasure unto me above all People; for all the Earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a Kingdom of Priests, and an holy Nation.*

From 1 Sam. i. to the End.

No Government can certainly be imagin’d more happy, more safe, more free, more honourable, than that, wherein the Fountain of all Wisdom and Power, of all Justice and Goodness, presides; and therefore the least that we can say of the *Israelites*, in desiring to change this *Form* for such a one, as was in use in the Nations round about them, *i. e.* for an *absolute* and *despotick* Government, where the Princes were Tyrants, and the Subjects all Slaves, argues at least a great Pitch of Folly and Indiscretion, a Baseness of Mind, an Ingratitude of Temper, a Spirit of Rebellion, and a secret Attachment to the idolatrous Practices of those People, whose King they were so eager to imitate. For, *Make us a King to judge us*, was equivalent in their Mouths, (as (e) one expresses it) to what their Fore-fathers demanded of *Aaron*, (f) *Make us Gods, that they may go before us*; because in this Manner, he, who best knew the Secrets

And the Crime of rejecting it.

† As God’s Design, in separating the *Israelites* from the rest of Mankind, was to perpetuate the Knowledge of himself, and the Doctrine of his Unity, amidst an *Idolatrous* and *Polytheistick* World; so was he pleas’d to stand, in two arbitrary Relations towards them, in that of a tutelar Deity and Protector, and in that of a supreme Magistrate and Lawgiver; besides the *natural* Relation, in which he stood towards them and all other Nations in common. But how long this *Theocracy* continu’d among the *Jews*, the Learned are not so well agreed; some thinking, that, from the first Commencement of Regal Power, or especially from its first Settlement in the Line of *David*, it ceas’d, as God’s Words to *Samuel* seem to import, *they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them*, 1 Sam. viii. 7. Whilst others imagine, that, from God’s first espousing the Cause of the *Israelites*, in the Time of their Tribulation in *Egypt*, even to the Coming of his blessed Son our Saviour *Christ* in the Flesh, it all along subsisted, tho’ with some Abatements, sometimes with seeming Interruptions; and to this they apply that famous Prophecy of *Jacob*, *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the Lawgiver from between his Feet, until Shiloh come*, Gen. xlix. 10. *i. e.* The *Theocracy* shall continue over the *Jews*, until *Christ* come to take Possession of his Father’s Kingdom. For what Lawgiver was there ever in *Judah*, until the Coming of *Christ*, but God, by the Ministry of *Moses*? Sentimens de quelques Théologiens Lettre 5, *Simon’s* Histoire Crit. de Vieux Test. and *Warburton’s* Divine Legation of *Moses*, Vol. II. Part ii.

(b) Numb. xxvii. 21.
xix. 3, &c.

(c) *Patrick’s* Commentary.

(e) *Saurin* Ibid.

(f) Exod. xxxii. 1.

(d) *Saurin’s* Dissert. 25. Vol. IV. Exod.

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of their Hearts, in his Answer to *Samuel*, has expounded their Meaning: *They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them; according to all the Works which they have done, since the Day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this Day, they have forsaken me, and served other Gods.*

Why God chose
so mean a Per-
son as Saul, for
their King.

WE have but one Thing more, to remark upon this Subject, and that is, — that the Manner, in which they demanded a King, was no less culpable, than the Ends they propos'd by it: For instead of consulting God upon an Affair of this Consequence, they went hastily to *Samuel*, and when, by fair Remonstrances, he is attempting to dissuade them from so dangerous an Enterprize, they turn *impetuously* upon him, and say, *nay, but we will have a King*; and this may be the Reason perhaps, why God gave them one in his Anger, descended of the meanest Tribe in *Israel*, and of the meanest Family in that Tribe, to shew them, that he himself was not satisfy'd with their Proceedings, nor could be pleas'd with any Thing, that was extorted from him by undutiful Importunities.

Why he return-
ed to a private
Life.

THE Meanness of *Saul's* Family indeed was the Reason, that some, who were present at his Election, openly despis'd him, and said, (g) *How can this Man save us?* And, therefore it is not unlikely, that, as these seditious Men refus'd to submit to his Government, he might leave the Publick Affairs in *Samuel's* Hands, and return to his Father's House, and there live privately, until some Opportunity of better establishing his Authority should happen to present itself. But, even in this Interval, supposing he did betake himself to some rural Employment, yet where is the great Disparagement of this, when we find the same done in other Nations, by Persons of the like Rank and Quality? When we find your *Curii*, your *Attilii*, your *Cincinnati*, and several other illustrious *Romans*, leaving the Plough to assume the Reins of Go-

vernment, and, afterwards, leaving the Government to return to the Plough?

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

IT must be acknowledg'd, however, that *Saul's* external Qualifications, viz. the Stature, and Comeliness of his Person, was no small Recommendation to a People, who desir'd a King, such as their Neighbours had. For, whatever we may think of the Matter, the People of the *East* had always a Regard to these in the Choice of their Kings; and accordingly, *Herodotus*, having taking a Review of *Xerxes's* whole Army, after a short Pause, declares himself thus: — That, (h) *among such a Multitude of People, there was not one, who, for Tallness and Goodliness of Person, did deserve the Throne, so much as he*; and, in another Place, assures us, that (i) *the Ethiopians always esteem'd him, who was of the most advantageous Stature, the fittest to be chosen King*; which cannot but remind us, of what *Samuel* says to the People, when he presents *Saul* to them: (k) *See ye him, whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the People*; for the Historian had told us before, that, (l) *from his Shoulders and upwards, he was higher than any of the People*.

His Tallness no
mean Accom-
plishment.

NAY, had I Leisure to gratify the Curious, I might shew, that, not only in the *East*, but in the *Western*, and most polite Countries, this Tallness of Stature, and Gracefulness of Appearance were always deem'd no unbecoming Qualifications for the regal Dignity; and therefore we find *Pliny*, who certainly was a fine Speaker, and knew how to single out the proper Qualities in any great Man, telling his Audience, in his Panegyrick to *Trajan*, that *the Strength and Tallness of his Body, the Nobleness of his Aspect, the Dignity of his Countenance, and the Gracefulness of his Speech, did every where denote and proclaim the Prince*: As, on the contrary, what Notions the Antients had of a Prince of a low Stature, and mean Appearance, we may gather from the *Pine*, which,

(g) 1 Sam. x. 27.
(l) Ibid. ix. 2.

(h) *Herodotus*, lib. vi. c. 77.

(i) Ibid. lib. vi. c. 29.

(k) 1 Sam. x. 24.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.

which, (m) *Plutarch* tells us, the *Lacedæmonians* set upon their King, for marrying a little Woman, who was likely to bring, & Βασιλέας, ἀλλὰ Βασιλίσκους, not *Kings*, but *Kinglings* to reign over them.

Saul's other
Qualifications.

It must be remember'd however, that Tallness of Stature was not the only Thing that recommended *Saul* to the Kingdom. His Father is said to have been (n) *a mighty Man of Power*; which, tho' it may not signify his great Wealth, and Interest in his Country, (because (o) *Saul* himself declares the contrary) yet it doubtless denotes his Strength, and Courage, and Fortitude of Mind, which, in a great Measure, he transmitted to his Son. For, who in War was more brave and undaunted than he, had he but known how to use his Victories, as well as acquire them? But here was his great Misfortune, that, when he was successful, he was too apt to be unmindful of what God had enjoin'd him. Who in Peace was more prudent, and politick, than he, till his Fears and Jealousies of *David*, mix'd with an unhappy Temper of Blood, made him malicious and implacable? Nothing can be suppos'd more wise and discreet, than his (p) *holding his Peace*, and taking no Notice of the Slights, which were put upon him at his first Election; nothing more great and generous, than his Answer to some, who would have prompted him to Revenge, after he had establish'd his Throne by a glorious Conquest: (q) *There shall not a Man be put to Death this Day; for to Day the Lord hath wrought Salvation in Israel.*

Nothing certainly was more different, than *Saul's* modestly declining the Offer of a Kingdom; when elected, passing by Indignities, and returning to a private Life; when called out to Action, mustering his Forces, leading out his Armies, vanquishing his Enemies, relieving his Friends; and, when settled in Peace, forgiving Injuries, and conferring Benefits; and the same *Saul*, sullen and discontented with

himself, false to his Promises, jealous of his Friends, listening to Sycophants, quarrelling with his Relations, attempting the Life of his own Son, murdering a whole City of God's Priests, and, instead of consulting the Divine Oracle, flying to the Devil for Advice in his Distress: And therefore we need less wonder, that we find the Beginning of his Reign so prosperous, and the latter Part of it ending in so sad a *Catastrophe*.

Whether *Saul* deserv'd this Fate, or no, we may best perceive by a Review of some Instances, wherein he is said to have offended God. In the Beginning of the third Year of his Reign, the *Philistines* rais'd so powerful an Army against him, that his own Forces, for Fear of them, deserted in great Numbers. *Gilgal* was the Place of their Rendezvous, and *Samuel*, who had hitherto transacted Matters between God and *Saul*, had given him Assurance, that, in seven Days time, he would come thither, (r) *to offer Sacrifices and Peace-Offerings, and to shew him what he was to do*; but (as *Abarbinel* has observ'd) every one of these Articles he transgress'd. For, (besides that he distrusted *Samuel's* Word, or thought it Scorn perhaps, that the King should stay for a Prophet) instead of waiting till the appointed Days were expir'd, he call'd for the Sacrifices on the *seventh Morning*; instead of ordering a proper Person to officiate, himself adventur'd to offer up the Sacrifice; and, instead of enquiring of God in a regular Way, he was determin'd to begin the War without any previous Consultation: So that, in this Behaviour of his, there were all the Signs of Pride and Ingratitude, Impatience and Distrust, Neglect of God, Contempt of his Prophet, and an apparent Invasion of the priestly Office; upon which Accounts *Samuel* declares, that (s) God would reject him, and not continue the Kingdom in his Family.

That he deserv'd God's Severity to him.

8 X

G O D,

(m) In the Beginning of his Book *περὶ βασιδῶν ἀγαγῶν*.
(p) 1 Sam. x. 27.

(q) Ibid. xi. 13.

(r) Ibid. x. 8.

(s) 1 Sam. ix. 1.

(t) Ibid. xiii. 14.

(u) Ibid. Ver. 21.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.

GOD, no doubt, by his divine Omniscience, foresaw what other Sins *Saul* would commit, and might therefore, without any Breach of his Mercy, have pronounc'd a peremptory Sentence against him; but the Passage before us implies no such Thing. It is no more than a Threat, or a simple Denunciation of what God would do, if he were not more observant for the future, and might have been revok'd, had he not persisted in his Disobedience, and committed a much greater Offence against the divine Majesty, in the War against *Amalek*.

THE Opposition, which these People gave the *Israelites*, while they were on their Journey to the Land of *Canaan*, provok'd God to such a Degree, that (as the Historian relates the Matter) he swore, that (t) *he would have War with Amalek from Generation to Generation*; and therefore commanded *Moses* to write it, for a Memorial, in a Book, and to rehearse it in the Ears of *Joshua*, that he would utterly put out the Remembrance of *Amalek* from under Heaven: And, when they were upon the Point of entering upon the promis'd Land, they were reminded of the same Divine Decree against that wicked People: (u) *Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the Way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt, how he met thee by the Way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary, and he feared not God: Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee Rest from all thine Enemies round about in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an Inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the Remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven, thou shalt not forget it.* In this Passage we have some Reasons assign'd, why God was so highly incens'd against the *Amalekites*. (x) They were Descendants of *Esau*, and therefore, by Pedigree, were allied to the *Israelites*, and of the Stock of *Abraham*. (y) They seem to

have broke off with the *Edomites* very early, and to have join'd themselves with the old *Horites*, a Nest of Idolaters, that liv'd on Mount *Seir*; and so turn'd *Apostates* from the Religion of *Abraham*. These Apostates were the first that drew the Sword against the *Israelites*, who were their Brethren in Blood, and, without any Manner of Provocation, took the Advantage, and came upon their Rear, while they were *feeble, faint, and weary*, which was not only a great Inhumanity, but done with an Intent to defeat God's Design in bringing up the People of *Israel*, and to hinder, if possible, their Entrance into *Canaan*; for which Reason the Impiety of these People is particularly taken Notice of, *viz. that they feared not God*, but that *their Hand was lift up against the Throne of the Lord, against the Throne of the God of Abraham, their Father*, which was no small Aggravation of their Crime. 'Twas for these Reasons then, that God had determin'd to destroy the whole Race of *Amalek*, and had made Choice of *Saul* to put his Decree in Execution: And if, to indulge his own Covetousness, he thought proper to prevaricate in the Matter, he became guilty of the like Sin, (to use the Words of the learned Dr *Jackson*) "as if a Judge, or inferior Magistrate, being intrusted to do Justice in a Matter, unto which his Sovereign had peremptorily and determinately sworn, should, upon a Bribe, or other sinister Respect, neglect his Duty, and, as much as in him lay, make his Master forsworn." And, as a Judge that would dare to do this, deserves more Deaths than one; so, considering the infinite Difference between God and Man, and the long Train of Wickedness, which *Saul* afterwards ran into, the Severity can hardly be thought excessive, in God's punishing his Contempt of this great Command, by the Alienation of the Crown from his Family.

" B U T

(t) Exod. xvii. 13, 14.
vindicated, Part ii.

(u) Deut. xxv. 17, &c.

(x) Gen. xxxvi. 19†

(y) Scripture

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Why the Amalekites were so severely dealt with.

“BUT why should the *Amalekites*, for Offences committed by their Forefathers so many Years before, deserve this Punishment? Or, suppose they did; why should young Children and Infants suffer as guilty, for the Crimes of their Parents?” Our blessed Saviour, in a Case somewhat like this, has help’d us to a Solution of the former Part of this Question, when he tells the *Jews* of his Time, that (a) *they built the Sepulchres of the Prophets, which their Fathers had killed; that, in so doing, they allowed, or approved, of their Deeds; and that therefore the Blood of all the Prophets, which had been shed from the Foundation of the World, should be required of that Generation.* From whence we may draw this Inference,—That, when any particular People commit the same Crimes, that their Ancestors did, when they approve of them, when they imitate them, and, by the like Actions, declare, that, if they were in their Circumstances, they would pursue the same Steps, they are justly punishable, even in Virtue of the Sentence, which pass’d upon their Ancestors; and that the divine Suspension of that Sentence, in order to try whether they would reform and amend, is so far from being an *Hardship*, that the longer it is continu’d, the more it is an Instance of God’s Mercy, and Patience, and Long-suffering.

Now, whoever looks into the Conduct of the Descendants of these old *Amalekites*, and considers the several Oppressions, which occasion’d the Exploits of *Ehud*, *Gideon*, *Jephthah*, and *Saul*, will soon perceive, that these later Generations were every Moment renewing the Rancour and Hostilities of their Forefathers against the Children of *Israel*, and consequently, were very justly compris’d under the Sentence, which had originally pass’d upon them.

(b) *CHILDREN indeed shall not be put to Death for their Fathers: But*

this Prohibition, we must observe, relates ^{From, 1 Sam. i. to the End.} to *Men*, and not to *God*. (c) *Men*, when they put a Child to Death for the Sin of his Father, assume an Authority, that they have no Right to. The Law, which authorizes them to punish the Father gives them no Power over the Life of the Child; † but God is Sovereign Lord and Master of the Lives of both. Men, who kill the Child, to aggravate the Punishment of the Father, can give the Child no Equivalent for the Loss of his Life; but God, in the future Dispensation of Things, can render him an ample Compensation for it; and therefore, since in a general Devastation, whether of War, Famine, or Pestilence, without a divine Interposition for every particular Person, the *Innocent* must necessarily suffer with the Guilty, ’tis Satisfaction enough to think, that these innocent Persons do not finally perish when they die, but are thence-forward taken under God’s immediate Care, and, in the World to come, will find their Retribution. (d) Those of all others, who die in their Infancy, (in what Manner soever it be) have Reason to bless God, what Grief soever it may give their Parents, for being deliver’d out of the Miseries of this Life, in order to be made happy in another.

SEVERAL of the *Jewish* Doctors are ^{Why Samuel might offer Sacrifices.} of Opinion, that, after the Death of *Eli* and his Sons, *Samuel*, by God’s particular Election, succeeded to the High-Priest’s Office; and this they are the rather induc’d to believe, because they read of his offering Sacrifices in Places distinct from the Tabernacle; of his wearing an *Ephod*, which was a Vestment peculiar to the Priest; of his consecrating two Kings, *Saul* and *David*; and find (e) the *Psalmist* placing him among Persons of that Order and Distinction. But the more probable Opinion is, that he was no more than a *Levite*, and, by Birth, incapable of the Priest-

(a) Luke xi. 47, &c.

(b) Deut. xxiv. 16.

(c) *Saun’s* Dissert. 30. Vol. IV.

† Deus quidem in Lege Hebræis datâ paternam Impietatem in Posteror se vindicaturum minatur: Sed ipse Deus jus Domini plenissimum habet, ut in res nostras, ita in vitam nostram, ut munus suum, quod sine ulla Causa & quovis tempore auferre cuivis, quando vult, potest. *Gratius*, de Jure Belli, Vol. II.

(d) *Le Clerc’s* Comment. in 1 Sam. xv. 3.

(e) Psal. xcix. 6.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.

Priesthood, which was only annexed to *Aaron's* Family; that there is no Mention made in Scripture of his having any particular Designation to that Office; that there is no Reason to think, that God would break through his own Laws, and Ordinances, in Favour of him, when there was no Occasion for it, since *Hophni* and *Phineas*, when they died, † might have Sons of sufficient Age to succeed them; that his putting on an *Ephod*, was no more than what *David* did; his sacrificing from the Tabernacle, what *Gideon* and *Saul* did; and his anointing Kings, what both *Elias* and *Elisba* did; so that these little Incidents of his Life could never give him that Character. And tho' it be granted, that the *Psalmist* has thought proper to place him in Company with *Moses* and *Aaron*, yet, at the same Time, he has taken Care to point us out the Difference between them; *Moses* and *Aaron* among the *Priests*, and *Samuel* among *such, as called upon his Name*, i. e. who sing God's Praise, which was the common Employment of the *Levites*. Put the Case then, that *Samuel* was no Priest, yet it seems to be a Privilege indulg'd to some great Men, upon some extraordinary Occasions, to offer Sacrifices, where there was neither the Tabernacle, nor any Altar, but what they themselves erected. Thus (f) *Gideon* and *Manoah* both, by the Directions of an Angel, made their Burnt-Offerings just by their own Habitations, and upon no other Altar than a Rock; and yet, that they were accepted by God, is evident from the miraculous Fire, that did consume them.

In most Countries, indeed, the Priesthood was a Privilege annex'd to the regal Dignity, and even in the *Jewish* Economy, where the sacerdotal Office was distinct. Thus *David*, upon the Reduction of the Ark, sacrific'd Oxen and Fatlings, (g) and *Solomon*, in the Beginning of his

Reign, and before the Temple was built, sacrific'd in high Places (h). But there is much more to be said for *Samuel*: He liv'd in a Place, that was an Academy of the Prophets, and whither much People resorted to be instructed in the Law. *Shiloh* was now laid desolate, and the Ark, which was the Tabernacle's chief Furniture, was separated from it; so that, till God had declar'd his Choice of some other Place, the People were, in a great Measure, at Liberty where to offer their Devotions; and *Samuel* more especially, in a City of so great Concourse, and where he himself presided, was oblig'd in Conscience to provide the People, in the best Manner he could, with a publick Place of Worship. He himself did but rarely, and upon extraordinary Occasions, officiate in the Sacrifice, yet that, whenever he did it, he did it with the Acceptance and Approbation of God, is plain from the Testimony of Scripture, and the Success, which God gave him against his Enemies, after he had perform'd such an Act of Devotion: For thus the Account is, (i) *And Samuel took a sucking Lamb, and offered it for a Burnt-Offering wholly unto the Lord, and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him, and the Lord thundred with a great Thunder on that Day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel.*

* THE *Jews* themselves acknowledge, that a Prophet is not subject to the ceremonial Law, but may, at any Time, himself sacrifice in what Place he pleases: And therefore, when *Samuel* went to *Bethlehem* to anoint *David*, it cannot be question'd, but that he had a Right to sacrifice there, tho' there was neither Ark nor Tabernacle in the Place; nor can it be deny'd, but that one Part of his Errand was to offer the Sacrifice, which he carry'd along with him. He had indeed an Af-

Why Samuel might pretend a Sacrifice at Bethlehem.

† It is generally suppos'd, but without any Grounds, that the Exercise of the High-Priest's Function was not enter'd upon till such an Age, and that *Eli's* Grand-Children were not as yet qualify'd for it: But *Josephus* (*Antiq. lib. xv. c. 2.*) informs us, that *Abishubus*, the Brother of *Mariamne*, was both admitted into that Place, and officiated in it, when he was no more than seventeen Years old. *Calmet's* Comment. in 1 Sam. xxv. 1.

(f) *Judg. vi. 20. and xiii. 19.* (g) 2 Sam. vi. 13. (h) 1 Kings iii. 2, 3. (i) 1 Sam. vii. 9, 10.

Authoritas Prophetica facit, ut sacrificium, ubicunque is adesset, & imperat, ritè fiat: substant enim Prophetie Imperio Leges rituales, Parentibus Hebraeis. *Grotius*, in 1 Sam. xvi. 2.

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fair of greater Consequence to transact at the same Time; but I cannot see, under what Obligation he was to discover that. (k) *Secrecy* is of great Use in all important Negotiations, and the concealing of one Design, under the Umbrage of another, is as just and laudable a Practice, as the drawing of a Curtain to keep out *Spies*. Acts of Religion indeed are sometimes made *Cloaks* for Iniquity; but 'tis hard to conceive what possible Prevarication there could be in performing one Act of Obedience towards God, in order to facilitate the Performance of another. The short of the Matter is, when there are two Ends of any Action, (as there were in the Case now before us) a Man may, without any Injury to Truth, declare the one, and conceal the other; nor can any Imputation justly fall upon God, for suggesting an Expedient to his Servant, in the Execution of which there confessedly was no Sin.

Why he might
slay Agag.

AND for the same Reason, because it was by God's Direction, or the Instigation of his Holy Spirit, that *Samuel* cut *Agag* in Pieces, we cannot say, that this Resentment carry'd him beyond the Bounds of Respect, that was due to his *Sovereign*. *Agag* had been a bloody Tyrant, and was now cut off, not for the Sins of his Ancestors only, but for his own merciless Cruelty. His Death had been predicted above 400 Years before, (l) by the Prophet *Balaam*; but *Saul*, out of a mistim'd Compassion, and in Opposition to the express Commands of God, had thought proper to spare him. Here therefore was a fit Occasion for *Samuel* to exert himself, and, notwithstanding the Presence of his Prince, to vindicate the Honour of his God, by expressing a Zeal suitable to (m) that of *Phineas*, in slaying *Zimri*, or of that noble Band of *Levites*, (n) who destroy'd the Worshipers of the *Golden-Calf*; tho' it does not necessarily follow, that he slew him himself, (o) because what he commanded might be called *his own Act*,

tho' it was nevertheless done by the publick Executioner of Justice.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

SOME Commentators have been so far carry'd away with the Manner of the Scripture Expression, viz. that (p) *an evil Spirit from the Lord troubled Saul*, as to think, that he was really possess'd with a Devil, which at certain Times came strongly upon him, and threw him into all the mad Fits whereof we read: But it should be consider'd, that the Word *Spirit*, in the sacred Language, is of a very extensive Signification, and denotes frequently, not only the Dispositions of the Mind, (q) but those of the Body likewise; that the Custom of the *Jeus* was to imagine, that every Affliction, whose Cause they were ignorant of, proceeded immediately from God; and that it is a very common Thing to find the Scripture Phrase accommodating itself to this vulgar Prejudice. Now in our Interpretation of Scripture, this, I think, should be a Rule, — That when a Passage is capable of two Senses, whereof the one supposes a *Miracle*, and the other a *natural Event* only, the latter should take Place, especially when there are no Circumstances to determine us to the contrary. But now, in the Case before us, (r) the frequent Access of *Saul's* Malady, the Symptoms that attended it, and the Remedy made use of to assuage it, do sufficiently denote, that it proceeded from a deep Melancholy, or black Bile inflam'd; and that the Man was *hypochondriack*, rather than *possess'd*. Agreeable to this bad Complexion of Body was the natural Temper of his Mind, which, through his whole Conduct, was suspicious, diffident, cruel, passionate, and vindictive. Add to this, that the Remorses of his Conscience, the Menaces of *Samuel*, God's Rejection of him, and his continual Apprehensions of being either dethron'd, or put to Death by his Competitor, confirm'd still more and more the evil Dispositions which his Dissemper engender'd, and carry'd them by Fits

(k) Scripture vindicated, Part ii.
xxxii. 27.

(l) Patrick's Comment. in 1 Sam. xii. 33.

xvii. 1. and Hosea iv. 12.

(m) Calmet's Comment. in 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

(n) Numb. xxiv. 7.

(o) Ibid. xxv. 1.

(p) 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

(q) Exod.

(r) Vide Job

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Fits into downright Madnefs: And as Madnefs is occasion'd by an *atrobilous* Humour highly inflam'd, and diffus'd through the Blood, and from melancholick Vapours, which ascend to the Brain, and make an Alteration in its Temperature, 'tis no hard Matter to conceive, that the agreeable Sound of a *musical* Instrument, which occasions Joy and Self-complacency, should dissipate these bad Humours, and make the Blood and Spirits return to their equal and natural Motion.

The Power of
Musick.

WHAT the Power of Musick is, to sweeten the Temper, and allay and compose the Passions of the Mind, we have some Examples from *sacred* History, but many more from the *prophane*. As this same *Saul* was returning from *Samuel*, he met, at the Place, which is called (s) *the Hill of God*, a Company of Prophets, playing on several Instruments; and such was the Effect of their Melody, *that the Spirit* (as the Scripture expresses it) *came upon him, and he was turned into another Man*. When *Elisba* was desir'd by *Jehosaphat*, to tell him what his Success against the King of *Moab* would be, the Prophet requir'd a Minstrel to be brought unto him, (t) *and when the Minstrel played*, 'tis said, *that the Hand of the Lord came upon him*: (u) Not that we are to suppose, that the Gift of Prophecy was the natural Effect of Musick, but the Meaning is, that Musick dispos'd the Organs, the Humours, the Blood, and, in short, the whole Mind and Spirit of the Prophet, to receive the supernatural Impression. The Truth is, common Experience, as well as the Testimony of the gravest Authors, does prove, that there is in Musick a certain Charm, to revive the Spirits, mellow the Humours, allay the Passions, and consequently, to dissipate that Rage, or Melancholy, which either fumes up into the Brain in Vapours, or overspreads the Heart

with Grief, and Dejection. We need less wonder therefore, that we find (x) the *Pythagoreans*, whenever they perceiv'd, either in themselves or others, any violent Passion beginning to arise, immediately betaking themselves either to their Flute or their Guittar; that we find (y) *Theophrastus* declaring, that Musick is an excellent Remedy against several Distempers, both of the Mind and Body; (z) others, that *Asclepiades*, a renown'd Physician among the Antients, was us'd to cure Madnefs by the Power of Symphony; and (a) others again, that the most violent Poison, that of the Sting of the *Tarantula*, has been expelled very frequently by this Means. The only remaining Difficulty is, how *David*, with his single Harp, and unassisted with any other Instruments, could effect such a Cure upon *Saul*? And to satisfy this, I must be oblig'd to enquire a little into the Nature of the *Jewish* Musick, which was possibly in Vogue at that Time.

MUSICK, tho' an Art of no Necessity to human Life, was certainly of a very early Invention. Before the Deluge, *Jubal* is called the Father, or Master of those who play'd upon the Harp, and † antient Organ, as the two *Hebrew* Words, (b) in that Place, are generally translated. In the Time of *Jacob*, we find his Father-in-Law complaining of him, (c) that he had stolen away from him, and not given him an Opportunity of dismissing him honourably, *with Mirth, and with Song, with Tabret, and with Harp*.

(d) *Moses*, upon his Passage over the *Red-Sea*, compos'd a Song, which was sung in Parts by himself, at the Head of the Men, and by (e) his Sister, with *Timbrels* and *Dancing*, leading up the Women. *Samuel*, upon his Institution of the Schools of the Prophets, introduc'd several Kinds of Musick; so that, before *Saul's* Election

(s) 1 Sam. x. 5, &c.
Var. Hill. lib. xiv. c. 27.

(t) 2 Kings iii. 15.

(u) Calmet's Comment. in 1 Sam. xxvi. 17.

(x) *Ælianus*

(y) Vide *Saurin*, Vol. IV. Dissert. 33.

(z) In Libro *αρετων ενθουσιασμων*.

(a) *Censorinus*, de Die Natali, lib. xii.

† This Instrument in *Hebrew* is named *Hugab*, and was a Kind of Flute compos'd of several Pipes, of a different Bigness, join'd to one another. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the Word *Musick*.

(b) Gen. iv. 21.

(c) Ibid. xxxi. 27.

(d) Exod. xv.

(e) Ibid. ver. 20.

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tion to the Kingdom, (f) we read of the *Psaltery*, and *Tabret*, the *Pipe*, and the *Harp*, in Use among them. The Kings of the *East* made it a Point of their Grandeur and Magnificence, to have Men to play to them upon several Occasions; and therefore we may suppose, that *Saul*, when he came to the Throne, in some reasonable Time, conform'd to the Mode. *David*, who was himself a great Master of Musick, kept in his House (g) some Companies of *singing Men*, and *singing Women*, as the Words of old *Bazillai* seem to imply; and *Solomon*, who deny'd his Heart no Pleasure, came not behind his Father in this Respect; for he had his (h) *Men Singers* and *Women Singers* likewise, and musical Instruments of all Sorts. *Josephus* tells us, that he made four hundred thousand, merely for the Use of the Temple; and therefore we may well suppose, that he had no small Variety of them, for the Use of the Musicians, that attended his Person.

M. *Le Clerc* seems to be of Opinion, that the Musick of the antient *Hebrews*, was not very regular: "They were a Nation, *says he*, entirely given to Agriculture, and had neither Theatres, nor any publick Diversions of this Kind; all the Use, which they made of their Musick, consisted in singing some sacred Hymns, which *David* instituted; but we have no Reason to think, that their Performances of this Kind were either harmonious or methodical:" But now, the learned *Kircher* has confuted all this. For, (i) *It is not probable*, *says he*, *that such an innumerable Quantity of musical Instruments, made by the most skilful Hands, should serve only to produce some rude and inartificial Sounds. Among the Hebrews there was certainly a wonderful Order of Songs and Chanters, a wonderful Distribution of the Singers, and a wonderful Agreement of Words fitted to harmonious Notes; neither is it likely, that all the Instruments of one Choir did perform their Parts in Unison, but that they made a various Har-*

mony, with an admirable and accurate Contexture of the upper Parts with their respective Basses. From 1 Sam. i. to the End.

BUT suppose we, (as some) imagine, that they wanted the Harmony of a Concert, or several Parts of Musick going on at the same Time; yet it is much to be question'd, whether that Simplicity of Composition, which resembles Nature most, is not a greater Beauty and Perfection, than that *Combination* of several Voices and Tunes, which constitutes our *Concerts*. For (to use the Words of another Author, in a Science wherein I profess to be no Adept) "The Antients, (k) *says he*, had as great a Number of Instruments as we; they had their Symphonies, and Voices of all Sorts, as well as we; but then they had this Advantage above us, that their singing Voices and Instruments neither drown'd the Words, nor destroy'd the Sense of what they sung. While their Ears were charm'd with the Melody, and their Hearts touch'd with the Delicacy of the Song, their Minds were transported with the Beauty of the Words, with the Liveliness, Grandeur, or Tenderness of the Sentiments. So that, at one and the same Time, they had all the pleasurable Impressions and Sensations, that the most exact Imagery of Thoughts and Sentiments, join'd with Symphony, or a true Harmony, could produce in their Breasts;" and for this Reason it is rightly suppos'd by *Josephus*, that while *David* play'd upon his Harp, he sung Psalms and Hymns to King *Saul*, whose Words very probably were adapted to the Occasion, and that both these put together were conducive to his Cure; tho' God, without doubt, who gave a Blessing to his Endeavours, was the principal Cause of it.

THAT *David's* Skill in playing upon the Harp, in a great Measure remov'd *Saul's* Melancholy, is manifest from his retiring from Court to his Father's House, and

(f) 1 Sam. x. 5. (g) 2 Sam. xix. 35.
(k) *Calmet's* Dissert. sur la Musique des Anciens.

(h) *Ecclef. ii. 8.*

(i) *Musurgia Univer. lib. ii. c. 4.*

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and betaking himself to his usual Occupation of a Shepherd. How long he continu'd with his Father the Scripture is silent; but a short Time might be sufficient to impair the King's Remembrance of him, especially when he appear'd in another Dress, than what he wore at Court, and was just now come off rough from a Journey. He had play'd to the King indeed, and happily reliev'd his Disorder: But who knows, but that he then wore an Habit proper for his Profession, as a *Musician*, and (as Cloaths make a great Alteration in a Man) appear'd now quite another Creature in his plain Shepherd's Garb? Who knows, but that the (l) *Minister* (whoever he was) that recommended him to the King, finding that his Musick prov'd medicinal to him, might take the Freedom to send to his Father, and request that his Son might continue a little longer at Court, even without the King's Knowledge or Direction? And it seems not unlikely, that the Office of *Armour-Bearer* (whatever it imported) was a Place of Honour and Respect, more than strict Duty and Attendance, because we find *David* sometimes retiring to his Father's House as not oblig'd always to reside at Court.

WITHOUT our supposing then, (as some Commentators have done) that *Saul's* Distemper had disturb'd his Head, and impair'd his Memory, we need but consider the Humour and Fashions of a Court, the Hurry of Business, the Multitude of Servants, the Variety of Faces, and the Shoals of Comers and Goers, that are every Day seen there; and withal, consider the momentous Issue of a Battle lost or won, and what full Employ the King or his chief Commander must have for all his Thought and Attention, when an Army is drawn up in Array, and ready to engage; and then we may easily account both for *Saul*, and *Abner's* wanting Recollection, when they saw *David* disguis'd in his Shepherd's Coat, and now entering upon an

Action, that was quite contrary to the Character of a *Musician*. From 1 Sam. i. to the End.

(m) BUT, after all, the Words in the Text say nothing of *Saul's* Forgetfulness of *David*, or that he enquir'd who he was. They only intimate, that he was ignorant of his Family, and desir'd to be inform'd from what Parent he was descended; and considering how many Servants there are in every Court, (especially in a lower Station) whose Pedigree the King knows nothing of, and how apt we are all to forget the Names of those, who live at a Distance, (as *Jesse* did from *Saul*) and with whom we hold little or no Intercourse, we need not much wonder, that *Saul*, who had no Concern for *David's* Family before this Adventure, should quite forget the Name of his Father, living in another Country, and which he had cursorily heard perhaps, but never once fix'd in his Mind: But now that the Son was going upon a desperate Enterprize, and was (n) to have great Riches, as well as the King's Daughter, if he came off victorious, it did not a little behove the King to know something more of the Parentage of this young Champion, and into what Family he was to match his Daughter: And, upon this Presumption, there is no Madness, no Absurdity; no Incongruity in his bidding *Abner*, “ (o) enquire whose Son the Strippling is. ’Tis a brave and gallant Youth. “ I am charm’d with his Courage, and “ Behaviour. If he falls in the Attempt, “ he shall have an honourable Interment; “ if he succeeds, and slays the Giant, he “ shall be my Son-in-Law.”

THE *Jews* give a very romantick Reason for *David's* going to *Achish*, the King of the *Philistines*, viz. that it was to demand an Execution of the Treaty, (whereby the Conqueror was to have a sovereign Power and Dominion over the Conquer'd) which *Goliath* proposed, when he challeng'd the *Israelites*; and that, upon this Account, the chief Ministers about that King were so alarm'd at his Arrival,

Why David retreated to Achish.

(p) Is

(l) *Le Clerc's* Comment. in 1 Sam. xxvii. 55. avii. 25.

(o) *Ibid.* Ver. 56.

(m) *Saurin's* Dissert. sur le Combat de *David*.

(n) 1 Sam.

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2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.

Is not this David, the King of this our Land? (p) as some take the Words. It is apparent, however, from the Context, that the *Land*, to which these Words relate, is *Judea*, and that *David*, at this Time, was in no Condition to make any high Demands.

SAUL's Rancour and Rage against him was so implacable, and now that so many were turn'd Informers against him, his Power to apprehend him was become so great, that there was no staying any longer in his Dominions; and therefore *David*'s Business was to find out some safe Retreat. All the other neighbouring Princes were at Peace with *Saul*, and must have deliver'd him up, had *Saul* demanded him. *Achish* was the only one in Hostility with him, and therefore his Kingdom the most proper Place for *David*'s Refuge, where, tho' he might not hope to lay long conceal'd, yet he might nevertheless promise himself kind Quarter, from the Advantages that would accrue to *Achish*, in attaching to his Interest a Person, that was evidently the Strength of the *Jewish* and Terror of the *Philistine* Army. Hard was the Fate of *David*, it must be own'd, when he was forc'd to flee for Protection to those, whom he had Reason to believe were his bitterest Enemies; but many great Men have been compell'd to the same Thing; *Themistocles* to go over to the *Persians*, and *Alcibiades* to the *Lacedemonians*, without turning *Apostates* to the Interest of their Country.

That he might
lawfully act
the Fool.

SELF-PRESERVATION, is one of the first Laws of Nature, and therefore, if *David*, when he came to the Court of *Achish*, found his Life in manifest Danger, I cannot see why he might not make use of any Means, consistent with a good Conscience, for the Preservation of it. He chose to personate the Fool, because he presum'd that *Achish* would readily conclude, that the Troubles, he had suffer'd under *Saul*'s Persecution of him, had

stupify'd his Senses, and turn'd his Head. But he was not the last wise Man who put on that Disguise; for, (q) did not *Solon*, when he found that the *Athenians* were going to surrender *Salamine*, his native Country, into the 'Hands of the People of *Megara*, counterfeit the *Mad-Man*, that he might, with more Impunity, take the Freedom to divert them from it? And (r) *Lucius Brutus*, that wise Imitator of the Fool, (as he is call'd) made use of the same Artifice, to escape the Suspicion of *Tarquin*, who had already murder'd his Father, and eldest Brother, in order to seize on their great Riches.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.

BUT supposing that there were no Examples of other Wise-Men to countenance this Practice of *David*'s; yet, where-ever did we read, in the Word of God, that Stratagems were not allowable against an Enemy? When the *Israelites* besieg'd *Ai*, God himself gave them Orders to make a Feint, as tho' they fled, that they might thereby draw the People out of the City; and can the Difference be so great, in pretending to a Want of Courage, and in counterfeiting a Deprivation of Reason? A Divine Direction indeed was in the one, and we do not read that it was in the other Case; but why might not God, who had *David* always under his immediate Care and Protection, put him upon this Expedient, as the only Escape he had for his Life? Or, if the Expedient was Matter of his own Invention, since the Circumstances he was in did absolutely require it, it cannot deserve our Blame, according to that common Distich, that goes under no less a Name than *Cato*'s.

*Inspiciens esto, cum Tempus postulat, aut
Res,
Stultitiam simulare Loco, Prudentia
summa est.*

THIS might be some *Apology* for *David*'s Conduct at this critical Juncture, supposing

He did not act
a Part, but
was seiz'd
with a Di-
stemper.

8 Z

(p) Vid. Sol. Jarchi, ad 1 Sam. xxi. 12.
Antiq. Rom. lib. 4.

(q) Diogen. Laërtius, lib. i. in *Solone*.

(r) Dionys. Halicarn.

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2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.

supposing that he personated the Fool, or Mad-Man: But if we look into the Scripture-Account of this Transaction a little more narrowly, we may possibly perceive, that *David* did not dissemble, or act a Part upon this Occasion, but that he was really seiz'd with a Distemper, and that Distemper, in all Probability, was an *Epilepsy*, or *Falling-Sickness*.

For, whereas it is said of *David*, that (s) *he was struck to the Heart* (for so it should be render'd) *at the Words* which the Officers of *Achish* said to their Master, and thereupon *was sore afraid of the King*, lest, at their Instigation, he should put him to Death; nothing is known to cause an *Epilepsy* sooner, * than a sudden and violent Fright. Whereas it is said in our Translation, that (t) *he changed his Behaviour before them*; the Words in the *Hebrew* are, *his Taste* (whereby some understand his Reason) *was chang'd*; but the *Septuagint* seem to have hit upon the right Sense, ἡλλοίωσε τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, *his Visage, or Countenance, was changed*; for every one knows what a sudden Alteration a Fit of this Distemper occasions in any one's Looks. Whereas it is said in our Translation, that he *feigned himself mad* in their Hands, the *Septuagint* render it, παρεφάρετο ἐν ταῖς Χερσὶν αὐτοῦ, *he trembled, and was convuls'd in his Hands*, as having no Power to direct their Motions, which is another known Effect of an *Epilepsy*. Whereas, again, our Translation says, that *he scrabled*, or (according to the marginal Note) *made Marks upon the Doors of the Gate*, the *Septuagint* render the Words, ἐπικλεῖν ἐπὶ τὰς θύρας αὐτοῦ, *he fell down against the Door of*

the Gate, and the *Hebrew Word Tava* implies, *with such Force and Violence*, as even to leave Marks or Prints upon them; so that he could not but bruise and hurt himself very much by these Falls. Nor is this all; for there is something in the Words of *Achish*, (if we will but adhere to the Version of the *Septuagint*) that shews *David's* Distemper to have been the *Falling-Sickness* beyond all Controversy: For, whereas our Translation is, *Lo, you see the Man is mad, wherefore then have you brought him to me? I have no need of Mad-Men*; the Words of the *Septuagint* are, ἰδὲ ἰδετε ἄνδρα ἐπιληπτον, ἵνα τὶ εἰσηγάγετε αὐτὸν πρὸς ἐμὲ; μὴ ἐλατίζωμαι ἐπιληπτον ἐγὼ; *Why did ye bring this Man before me? Ye see that he is in an Epilepsy, and epileptick Men I do not want. Why then did you bring him, to be taken with a Fit in my Presence?* Had *David*, all this while, been only *playing the Fool*, as our Translation makes him, he might possibly have given *Achish* some Diversion (as * Fools in great Houses were often kept to give Diversion) by his awkward or frantick Tricks; (u) but the Horror, wherewith the King was struck at the first Sight of him, and his Indignation against his Officers, for bringing him into his Presence, are enough to make one believe, that his Distemper had made him a *frightful Object*; and therefore the King commanded immediately to have him remov'd out of his Presence, and out of the Palace.

UPON the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that, as *David* had the true Symptoms of an *Epilepsy* upon him, which, in

(s) 1 Sam. xxi. 12.

* The Author of the Book, which goes under the Name of *Hippocrates*, written professedly upon this Subject, (περὶ τῆς νόσου) among many other Causes of this Distemper, makes mention of a sudden Fright as one:

Ἐπιληψία δὲ ἐξ ἀδύλου φόβου γινόμενη.

(t) 1 Sam. xxi. 13.

* *Tarquin the Proud* kept L. *Junius Brutus* as a Fool, (for so he pretended to be) to divert his Children with his absurd Discourse and Actions. But *Anacharsis*, who liv'd about three hundred Years after *David*, complains of this Custom among the *Grecians*, by telling us, that a Man was a Creature too serious to be design'd for so ridiculous a Purpose; and (to shew the Continuance of this Custom) *Pliny*, writing to one of his Friends, who had complain'd to him, that, at a great Entertainment, he had pass'd his Time but very disagreeably, by reason of the kept Fools, who were always interrupting Conversation, tells him, that every one has his Taste, but, as for himself, he could never be delighted with such Extravagancies, though some Complaisance was due to those of another Way of Thinking. *Épill. 17.*

(u) *Saurin*, Vol. IV. Dissert. 34. in Mr *Dumont's* Letter.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the End.